

Art and Identity in Thirteenth- Century Byzantium

**Eastmond, Antony;
Brubaker, Professor Leslie;
Bryer, Professor Anthony**

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ANTONY EASTMOND

ART AND IDENTITY
IN THIRTEENTH-CENTURY BYZANTIUM
HAGIA SOPHIA AND THE EMPIRE OF TREBIZOND



BIRMINGHAM BYZANTINE AND OTTOMAN MONOGRAPHS

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About the series

Birmingham Byzantine and Ottoman Monographs is devoted to the history, culture and archaeology of the Byzantine and Ottoman worlds of the East Mediterranean region from the fifth to the twentieth century. It provides a forum for the publication of research completed by scholars from the Centre for Byzantine, Ottoman and Modern Greek Studies at the University of Birmingham, and those with similar research interests.

About the book

The church of Hagia Sophia in Trebizond, built by the emperor Manuel I Grand Komnenos (1238–63) in the aftermath of the Fall of Constantinople to the Fourth Crusade, is the finest surviving Byzantine imperial monument of its period. *Art and Identity in Thirteenth-Century Byzantium*, with extensive illustrations in colour and black-and-white, provides a new analysis of the architecture, sculptural decoration and extensive wall paintings in the church. Antony Eastmond situates the church in the context of political and cultural developments across the Byzantine world in this turbulent period, and examines questions of cultural interchange on the borders of the Christian and Muslim worlds of eastern Anatolia, the Caucasus and Persia. He argues that a new visualisation of Byzantine imperial ideology emerged in Trebizond, determined as much by craftsmen and expectations of imperial power as by imperial decree; and that this was a credible alternative Byzantine identity to that developed in the empire of Nicaea.

About the author

Antony Eastmond is Reader in the History of Byzantine Art at the Courtauld Institute of Art, University of London, UK

I dedicate to this book to Marion with love

*(and to the baggage handlers at Trabzon Airport, without
whom ...)*

ART AND IDENTITY IN
THIRTEENTH-CENTURY BYZANTIUM

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Anthony Bryer
John Haldon



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Art and Identity in Thirteenth-Century Byzantium

Hagia Sophia and the Empire of
Trebizond

Antony Eastmond

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List of Abbreviations

~~Eklogoi Akropolitai~~
~~Georgios Akropolitae Opera~~, ed. A. Heisenberg, corrections by P. Wirth (Stuttgart, 1978); trans. W. Blum, *Georgios Akropolites, Die Chronik*, Bibliothek der griechischen Literatur: 28 (Stuttgart, 1989)
~~Anatolia~~ *Studies*
~~Apheion Pontou~~
~~Art~~ *Bulletin*
~~BB~~ *East Byzantine Texts and Translations*
~~BE~~ *Kartlisa*
~~Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies~~
~~Bryer, M. V., and J. P. Wiles~~, *The Byzantine Monuments and Topography of the Pontos*, *Dumbarton Oaks Studies*: 20 (Washington DC, 1985)
~~Byzantine Studies Conference. Abstracts~~
~~BSOAS~~ *of the School of Oriental and African Studies*
~~Byzantion~~
~~Byzantinobu Igarka~~
~~Byzantinische Forschungen~~
~~Byzantinoslavica~~
~~Byzantinische Zeitschrift~~
~~Cahiers d'Archéologiques~~
~~CFHB~~ *fontium historiae byzantinae*
~~Choniates~~, *Historia*, ed. J.L. van Dieten, CFHB: 11 (Berlin, 1975); trans. H. Magoulias, *O City of Byzantium, the Annals of Niketas Choniates* (Detroit, 1984)
~~Metropolitani~~ Chrysanthos of Trebizond, 'He Ekklesia tes Trapezountos', *AP* 4–5 (1935), 1–904
~~CSHB~~ *scriptorum historiae byzantinae*
~~DAAM~~ *amenti di Architettura Armena* (Milan, 1970-)
~~DOAP~~ *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*
~~Encyclopedia of Islam~~, 2nd ed. (Leiden, 1973-)

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Hagitha S., ed., *The Church of Haghia Sophia at Trebizond* (Edinburgh, 1968)
Din S., *Schukengeschichte des Ibn Bibi*, trans. H.W. Duda (Copenhagen, 1960)
IAA *Imperatorskoi Akademii Nauk*
Job *Buch der österreichischen Byzantinistik*
JWCI *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*
Kariye Djami ed., *The Kariye Djami*, Bollingen Series: 70 (New York, 1966), 3 vols; vol 4: *Studies in the Art of the Kariye Djami and Its Intellectual Background* (London, 1975)
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Of *Antalia Christiana Analecta*
ODB *Bazhdan* ed., *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium* (Oxford, 1991), 3 vols.
Orth *Christianus*
Bach *Grandes Relations Historiques*, books 1–13: ed. & trans. A. Failler, V. Laurent, *CFHB*: 24/1–4 (Paris, 1984–2000)
Michael *Banaretos*, 'Peri ton Megalon Komnenon', in *AP* 22 (1958), 61–81, ed. O. Lampsides; trans. Fallmerayer, *OF* 4: 41–69
PG *Migne* ed., *Patrologia Graeca* (Paris, 1857–66)
RBW *Wessel, M. Restle*, eds., *Reallexikon zur byzantinischen Kunst* (Stuttgart, 1966-)
RECH *Des Historiens des Croisades. Historiens Orientaux*
REB *Revue des études byzantines*
SPBS *Society for the Promotion of Byzantine Studies. Publications*
Viz *Vremenskii Vremennik*

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Acknowledgements

Any book with ‘Trebizond’ in its title will inevitably be compared with Rose Macaulay’s *The Towers of Trebizond*. Just as inevitably it will be found wanting. However, I hope that what this book lacks in terms of the style, humour and philosophy of Rose Macaulay’s book it makes up for by the inclusion of pictures.

The British have a long history of studying the Pontos, and this book relies on the fruits of that history. The name that dominates the field (and my footnotes) is that of Bryer, who has supported and nurtured my work (although he may disagree with my conclusions). My study of Hagia Sophia depends on – and, I hope, celebrates – the restoration of the church carried out under the direction of David Winfield. David and June Winfield talked me through their memories of the work, showed me all their records and images, and offered generous hospitality and beautiful views on the Isle of Mull. My debt to them is evident on every page. The restoration work was organised by David Talbot Rice, whose interest in Trebizond stretched back to the 1920s, and was financed by the Russell Trust from 1957 to 1962. The Russell Trust’s continuing willingness to support the church, this time through a publication grant for this book is eloquent testimony to their long-term interest in the work carried out then: I thank Mrs Croal for her trust in my work. The Dr M. Alwyn Cotton Foundation was similarly generous.

Laurie, the heroine (hero?) of Macaulay’s book, was accompanied to Trebizond by Aunt Dot, Father Hugh Chantry-Pigg, and a camel (a white Arabian Dhalur [single hump]) among others; my various art historical pilgrimages to Trabzon between 1988 and 2001 were shared with Liz James, Zaza Skhirtladze and Marion Lynden-Bell (as she was then) among others, although here the analogy with Laurie becomes

fraught. In between long stints at the Ayasofya Müzesi, to the staff of which I extend my thanks, my companions listened to and critiqued my ideas, and we witnessed the rise and fall of the Russian Bazaar and its accompanying Natashas. Whilst in the city, I received magnificent hospitality from Sevtap and Sena Türko, the daughter and granddaughter of Cumhur Odabaşıoğlu, Bryer's blood-brother, immortalized in *The Towers of Trebizond*.

My interest in Hagia Sophia and the empire of Trebizond started out as a practice exercise for an otherwise unrelated PhD on medieval Georgia in May 1990. The church has been festering away in my mind ever since. This book bears no relation to the naïve text of more than a decade ago, for which many people will be greatly relieved, not least Robin Cormack, who made me write that first essay, and whose intellectual rigour remains an inspiration. The fact that I am still working on Byzantine matters ten years on is testament to the support and friendship I have received from many colleagues, not least Liz James, Ruth Webb, Dion Smythe and Barbara Zeitler. The final text was written at Warwick, where my colleagues in the History of Art department have listened in seminars to endless variations on this theme.

As my research on Trebizond progressed, I have received help and advice from Michael Angold, Julian Gardner, Zaga Gavrilovic, Robert Hillenbrand, Lynn Jones, Darejan Kldiashvili, Ruth Macrides, Margaret Mullett, Michael Rogers and Dorothy Verkerk. Michael Grünbart was kind enough to send me materials from Jacob Fallmerayer's diaries, which he is currently in the process of publishing; Roger S. Wieck gave me an advance view of the Pierpont Morgan's catalogue of Islamic Manuscripts; and Selina Ballance sent me a copy of an unknown watercolour of Hagia Sophia. Audiences in Birmingham, Chapel Hill, NC, Dublin, London and Oxford forced me to articulate and clarify my ideas, and I was able to manipulate the XXXIII Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, held at Warwick in March 1999, to make speakers answer some of the questions that I had, and to fill in some of the huge gaps in my knowledge of the Christian East. I am grateful to all the speakers and others who attended it. One trip to Trabzon was organised as part of a tour for the British Museum, which enabled me to meet many people, not least David and Helen Melliars-Smith, who kindly shared their memories of Trebizond, and lent me their photographs from the 1960s. Other thanks for photographs go to Saba and Eteri in Georgia; Jim Crow; John Lowden; Demetra Papanikola-Bakirtzi, Nicole and Jean-Michel Thierry, Roger S. Wieck and Annabel Wharton; as well as to the staff of the DAI in Istanbul, the Benaki in Athens and the CMN in Paris. Harry Buglass prepared the maps for me, and John Smedley at

Ashgate has long supported this work.

This book has long been in the background at home, where Marion, Helen and Stephen have all provided vital distractions.

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Preface

In concluding the history of this Greek state [Trebizond], we inquire in vain for any benefit that it conferred on the human race. It seems a mere eddy in the torrent of events that connects the past with the future. The tumultuous agitation of the stream did not purify a single drop of the waters of life.

George Finlay¹

In the aftermath of the fall of Constantinople to the Fourth Crusade in 1204, the city of Trebizond emerged as one of three new centres of the Byzantine empire, each ruled by a rival dynasty which sought to claim the imperial crown for itself. This small state, located at the south-east corner of the Black Sea, survived as an independent empire until 1461, eight years after the final fall of Constantinople to the Ottoman Turks. This book is concerned with the early history of the empire of Trebizond, from its creation to the late thirteenth century, which it examines through a study of its major surviving monument, the church of Hagia Sophia. Hagia Sophia was built by the emperor Manuel I Grand Komnenos (1238–63), the greatest of the city's thirteenth-century emperors, and is the only complete Byzantine imperial commission from the period of the Latin empire of Constantinople (1204–1261). It has not been the subject of detailed study for more than thirty years. The church provides important evidence about the development of Byzantine art in this period, and about the promotion of imperial identity by one of the rival claimants for the Byzantine throne. The early decades of the empire of Trebizond have also received relatively little attention, especially compared to its better documented later history. This book uses the study of the church and the history of the empire to illuminate each other.

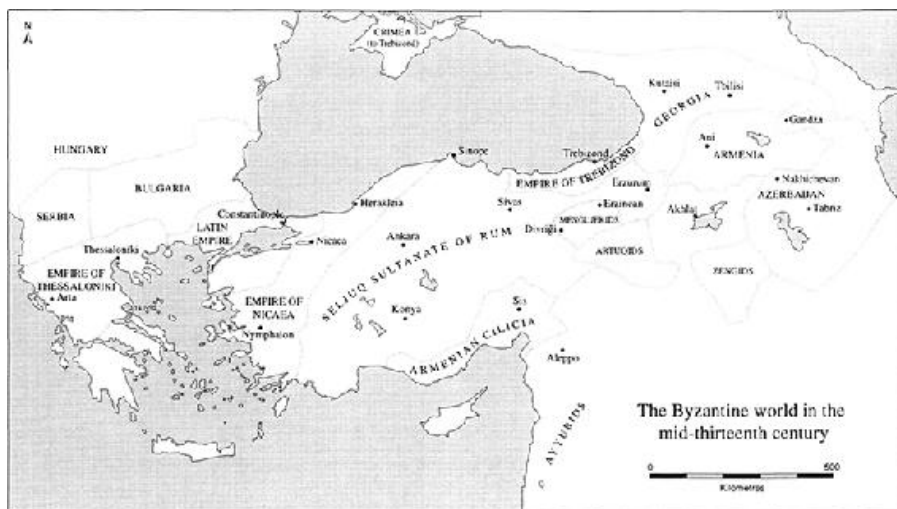
Trebizond was one of the major Byzantine centres in eastern Anatolia. Its port was important for commerce arriving in caravans from the east. Its easily defensible position ensured its importance as a Byzantine military outpost, and it was used as a base for military expeditions to the east. Later it served as a stronghold as other parts of Anatolia fell first to invading Arabs and then to the Seljuq Turks. Consequently, Byzantine emperors over the centuries were concerned to protect, enhance and improve the city, and major commissions are recorded in, among others, the reigns of Justinian (527–65), Basil I (867–86) and Basil II (976–1025).² The relative distance of the city from Constantinople encouraged a degree of autonomy in the region, which was exploited by the local noble families, notably the Gabrades, who were able to wield much power and influence in Anatolian politics.³ The city also acted as an important ecclesiastical centre to which neighbouring countries turned for advice and legitimacy and it had access to important silver mines in its hinterland.⁴

The natural borders of the empire, the Black Sea and the Pontic Alps, were its greatest defence and the guarantor of its security, but at the cost of isolating Trebizond from Anatolia and ultimately from Byzantine history. The state has long been relegated to the status of a semi-mythical place, famous for romance, decadence, luxury and intrigue. From as early as the sixteenth century, a mythical ‘Trebizond’ has acted as the setting for a series of orientalist tales designed to titillate and outrage European readers; a land where fable and legend are already stronger than fact and reason.⁵ Indeed, the empire of Trebizond has been dismissed from Byzantine history for as long as it has been studied.⁶ Finlay’s damning historical judgement of what he saw as a morally bankrupt and historically worthless despotic state, quoted at the start of this preface, has been repeated frequently by others.⁷ Georg Ostrogorsky, in his general history of the Byzantine state, dismissed the empire as remote, insignificant, untouched and indifferent.⁸

Yet its first emperors self-consciously gave themselves the supreme imperial Byzantine titles and they saw themselves at the heart of the empire. They fought to recapture its capital of Constantinople, and they recreated much of the imperial court bureaucracy in this small city on the Black Sea.⁹ To study the empire of Trebizond, then, is to be faced by an immediate conflict. Should we judge it on its own terms, and according to its own pretensions, or accept the consensus of modern historians? Was Trebizond a true expression of Byzantium, or was it, as Michael Angold has described it, a ‘Greek emirate’: “Its history belongs with that of Anatolia and the Black Sea rather than with that of the late Byzantine empire”?¹⁰

The study of Trebizond calls into question many preconceptions

about what Byzantium was, and argues that our modern notions of what Byzantium represented in the period after the fall of Constantinople in 1204 are in need of substantial revision. With the church of Hagia Sophia as its principal piece of evidence, this book explores the identity of empire presented by emperor Manuel I Grand Komnenos and his predecessors. The church allows us to study a material manifestation of an imperial ideology, and to see one of the possible paths along which Byzantine art and culture developed away from Constantinople. The book takes a thematic approach to the design and decoration of the church and analyses its architecture, sculpture and painting in order to explore the issue of Byzantine political identity and cultural orientation in Trebizond. In recent years there has been a wealth of new research into the cultures which surrounded Trebizond, the Georgians and Laz to the east, the Armenians to the south-east, the Turkoman tribes of the Mengujekids, Saltuqids, Artuqids and others to the south, and the Seljuqs of Rum to the south-west. This allows us to place the empire of Trebizond more firmly in its regional context, and to study the degree to which its culture derived from those around it, and the degree to which it was able to appropriate ideas, motifs and policies from its neighbours and use them to its own ends. What was Byzantium in the thirteenth century?



1 Map of the Byzantine world in the mid-thirteenth century

Introduction

The Byzantine empires in the thirteenth century

The church of Hagia Sophia in Trebizond ([plates I, II](#)) was built and decorated in the reign of the emperor Manuel I Grand Komnenos (1238–63). At his coronation, which probably took place in the cathedral of the Panagia Chrysokephalos in Trebizond, Manuel adopted the imperial title of ‘Faithful Emperor and Autocrat of the Romans’. This was the traditional title of the ruler of the east Roman empire, Byzantium.¹ Manuel thereby inherited a claim to act as Christ’s vice-regent on earth and to wield universal authority over all Christendom, which had begun when his grandfather, Alexios I Grand Komnenos (1204–14) had first established himself as ruler in the city. Through his coronation Manuel became one of three men to appropriate the hallowed imperial title and the potentially awesome power that went with it. It was a rivalry that had been fought for more than thirty years since the fall to the Fourth Crusade in 1204 of Constantinople, the queen of cities, the heart of empire, the new Rome and new Sion. By 1238, the rivals were well established, as were the natures of their claims. Each man ruled a different part of the fragmented territories of the Byzantine empire, and each man portrayed himself as the rightful inheritor of the imperial crown, and as the legitimate ruler of the whole Christian world ([Fig. 1](#)). In so doing all three sought to proclaim their state as the true successor to the Roman empire: Byzantium in exile.

The claimant in the strongest position was the emperor John III Doukas Vatatzes (1221–54) who ruled north-western Anatolia and much of Thrace from Nicaea.² His location across the Sea of Marmara from Constantinople, and his political and military position gave him the most realistic hope of recapturing the great city. He was surrounded by many remnants of the old Byzantine imperial court and bureaucracy, transplanted to Nicaea from Constantinople. John could claim an additional aura of legitimacy from the fact that he had been

crowned as emperor in 1221 by the traditional bestower of the crown, the patriarch of Constantinople, Manuel I Sarantenos, who shared John's exile in Nicaea. John's father-in-law and predecessor, Theodore I Laskaris (1205–21), who had been crowned as the first Nicaean emperor in 1208, had held the imperial rank of *despot* before the fall of Constantinople in 1204, so providing another link with the old regime.

The second rival, the emperor John Komnenos Doukas (1237–42), was based in Thessaloniki, to the west of Constantinople. However, his claim to the title of emperor and his chances of recapturing Constantinople were, by 1238, looking increasingly frail.³ John acted as a front for his father, Theodore Komnenos Doukas (ruled 1215–30; died 1253). Theodore had expanded from his base in Epiros to capture the major city of Thessaloniki, where he was crowned as emperor in 1225 by the autocephalous archbishop of Ohrid, Demetrios Chomatenos.⁴ Although he was last of the rivals to elevate himself to imperial rank, Theodore had briefly looked the most likely winner, when his army moved to within striking distance of the walls of Constantinople. Theodore had only been prevented from retaking the great city by tsar Ivan II Asen of Bulgaria (1218–41) who defeated him in battle at Klokotnitsa in 1230, and later blinded him. On his release in 1237, Theodore sought to re-establish power, first by forcing his ineffectual successor Manuel (1230–37) into exile, and then by ruling through his son John, whom he had crowned as emperor. John's position, with little military support or resources, was barely tenable and in 1242 he was forced by John III Vatatzes of Nicaea to renounce his claim to the throne and accept the lesser title of *despot*, which he held until his death in 1244.

Manuel I Grand Komnenos's position in this contest was ambivalent. In many ways he had the strongest claim to the imperial purple. He could trace his descent in a direct line back to the Komnenian dynasty which had dominated the Byzantine throne for over a century until 1185, and he was the fourth man to rule Trebizond since 1204.⁵ Although Manuel's use of the title of 'Emperor and Autocrat of the Romans' in his donor portrait in Hagia Sophia is now the earliest surviving record of the use of the imperial rank in the city, the rebuilding of the city's cathedral after 1214 by Alexios I Grand Komnenos to accommodate coronation ritual (which is examined in [chapter 2](#)) suggests that its adoption already had a long history in Trebizond, possibly even predating that in Nicaea.⁶ Moreover, Manuel also had access to wealth through rich silver mines in the Pontic Alps, and this funded his building programme and his army, which emerged as an effective and capable force under his rule.⁷

Manuel's disadvantage, however, lay in the location of his empire. Trebizond stood at the north-east corner of Anatolia, hemmed in between the Black Sea and the Pontic mountains, and so was isolated from direct contact with Constantinople. Its southern and western borders ran against those of the Seljuq Turks, whose powerful state frequently threatened the empire's very survival; and to the east lay Georgia, which also claimed Trebizond as a vassal state. The Mongol conquests of the Caucasus and Anatolia in the 1230s changed the position further. Manuel's empire was on the fringe of the Byzantine world, yet he sought to proclaim Trebizond as its centre. Manuel ruled from 1238 until 1263, and so encompassed nearly half the period of exile, and overlapped by two years the recovery of Constantinople by Michael VIII Palaiologos in 1261. His reign therefore saw an enormous change in the nature and status of the Byzantine empire, and the veracity and viability of his own claim.

The three Greek emperors faced a fourth rival, the Latin emperor Baldwin II (1237–61), who ruled in the great city of Constantinople, the cornerstone of the empire, and the key to its revival.⁸ Baldwin was dependent on Venetian support and his policies were often determined by Venetian interests, which severely limited his ability to manoeuvre, even after appeals to the west.⁹ The Orthodox kingdoms around Byzantium also sought to take advantage of the power vacuum at the centre. From the 1180s, the rulers of Bulgaria and Georgia had taken advantage of the disputes and usurpations at the imperial court to begin to display their power in increasingly imperial terms.¹⁰ This was followed by the Rubenid/Hetumid rulers of Armenian Cilicia after 1204, and then by the Nemanjic rulers of Serbia who were able to compel recognition of their monarchic status from both East and West in 1217.¹¹ Other areas on the edges of the Byzantine world, such as Rhodes, also sought to break away from central control.¹²

There was nothing new in rival claimants all seeking the Byzantine crown at the same time; imperial opponents had faced each other in every century of the empire's history. What was new was the manner and nature of the rivalry between the three Greek contenders. This was no simple civil war to be fought out between rival armies, although each of the successor empires did seek to win back Constantinople and overcome their rivals by military might. While Constantinople remained in Latin hands and the Greek contenders sought to build up their own power bases outside the symbolic capital, the war had to be fought by different means, in which government and Orthodoxy, honour and legitimacy, ceremony and ritual were all key weapons. It was a fight for the aura, symbols and authority of imperial rule as much as for the real power that might accompany it. This was a battle to recreate the empire in exile; and each successor

state sought to argue that it was the true inheritor of the power and authority of the Byzantine empire and that only its rulers could legitimately claim the titles and attributes of the emperor.

This book investigates the ways in which one of the rivals, Manuel I Grand Komnenos, proclaimed his claim to the throne and his inheritance of Byzantine power in the successor state of Trebizond. It analyses Manuel's claims through a close examination of the principal surviving record of his reign, the church of Hagia Sophia at Trebizond, which provides a detailed and expressive model for the construction of a Byzantine imperial identity in exile. The image of Byzantine identity developed in Nicaea (which will be outlined below), which most historians have accepted as the standard model for the thirteenth century, was not the only model available. There was more to Byzantium than just Nicaea after 1204.

The twin contests for Constantinople and for imperial legitimacy underwent many twists and turns in the decades after 1204 as the various rivals were able to exert their claims with more or less conviction and authority. However, military or political reverses did not necessarily affect the arguments for legitimacy. The rhetoric of empire and the realities of power were not mutually dependent. The territorial battle was only finally settled in 1261, when Michael VIII Palaiologos, ruler of Nicaea, recaptured Constantinople after its Latin occupiers had fled. He entered the city at the head of a great procession led by the famous icon of the Theotokos Hodegetria to be crowned again in the church of Hagia Sophia. His recapture of the imperial city re-established the authority of the Byzantine emperor and created a new ruling dynasty, which was to remain in power until 1453. However, Manuel I Grand Komnenos did not concede defeat, but continued to maintain his claim to imperial supremacy until his death. It is this rhetorical, moral battle for supremacy, which is recorded in the monuments of the city of Trebizond, that forms the core of this book. The titular battle continued through the reigns of the next three emperors of Trebizond (all sons of Manuel), until John II Grand Komnenos (1280–85; 1285–97) finally agreed in 1282 a treaty with Michael VIII in Constantinople. At this, according to the Palaiologan historian George Pachymeres, writing in c.1310, John II agreed to exchange his red shoes for black and to accept the lesser title of Despot of Trebizond, in return for a marriage alliance with Michael's daughter, Eudokia.¹³

It is often said that Constantinople was Byzantium. For the chronicler Niketas Choniates, lamenting the city in exile in Nicaea in c.1210, it was the terrestrial heaven, the second firmament, the source of so much of the empire's social, political, economic, artistic and cultural life: 'O city, city, eye of all cities, universal boast,

supramundane wonder, wet nurse of churches, leader of the faith, guide of Orthodoxy, beloved topic of orations, the abode of every good thing!¹⁴ As a result, the fall of the city has encouraged the period of the Latin empire to be neglected by modern historians and art historians. Indeed, more often than not, the years from 1204 to 1261 are only briefly outlined in larger studies of Byzantine history and culture.¹⁵ The exile has provided a means for the modern categorisation of Byzantine history: the ‘middle Byzantine’ period ending with the calamitous sacking of Constantinople by the forces of the Fourth Crusade in 1204, and the ‘late Byzantine’ or ‘Palaiologan’ period only beginning with Michael VIII’s triumphant return in 1261.¹⁶ The years of exile occupy a liminal space. However, the loss of Constantinople raises many questions about the Byzantine empire, its self-perception and about constructions of identity. Examining these reveals much about the very nature of the empire, and so this period must be seen as one of the most interesting in Byzantine cultural history. A study of the fragmentation of Byzantium can tell us much about what the empire was. How did Byzantium survive in exile? What devices were adopted to promote and retain belief in a divinely-ordained empire, especially at a time when that divine support had been so obviously undermined by the loss of the imperial city? How did claimants promote their rule, both on the larger international stage where their claims to Constantinople were judged, but also on the local stage, where their power was actually exercised among a local population that was very different from that in the great city?¹⁷ How did the Greek emperors face the problem of projecting a suitable imperial identity which would act as a rallying call to Greeks in the event of their recapturing Constantinople, but which at the same time would project a credible image of power to the peoples they actually ruled, in these three disparate parts of the empire?¹⁸ One of the themes that will concern us in this book is the ways in which these two different and often contrasting needs were balanced. What did these rival rulers believe that they were fighting for: what was Byzantium?

To the extent that recent historians have seen continuity in Byzantium from 1204 to 1261, they have looked to the empire of Nicaea.¹⁹ That they should do so was the aim of George Akropolites’s *Chronike Syngraphe*, which is the main narrative source for the reconquest. Akropolites was related by marriage to Michael VIII and it is apparent where his sympathies lay. The modern emphasis on Nicaea in the years of exile has, of course, been validated with hindsight by the fact that it was Nicaea that did eventually provide the new emperor in Constantinople. It has also largely been dictated by the survivals of thirteenth-century chronicle accounts, encomia, letters,

charters and other documents from Nicaea rather than from Epiros or Trebizond.²⁰ These Nicaean texts reveal much about the Nicaean concepts and perceptions of the Byzantine empire, and it is from these that most historians have drawn their conclusions. The government and society of Nicaea have been the subject of a magisterial study by Michael Angold, which has examined the continuity of government in exile.²¹

The texts from Nicaea show that the debate about imperial legitimacy and power, indeed about the very identity of Byzantium, raged at a number of different levels in the thirteenth century. The loss of Constantinople resulted in many practical problems for all the rival states. They had to establish armies, invent or revise government bureaucracies to collect taxes, organise commerce and control society, and they sought to oversee and direct the organisation of the church in their territories. These were the immediate priorities for day-to-day government. However, the rival emperors had not only to govern but also be seen to govern, and this opened up a series of larger, theoretical problems. The loss of Constantinople forced many to re-evaluate what the empire was, what powers its ruler held and how it should be ruled. Forced into exile, away from the palaces, churches, fora and other monuments that had for so many centuries housed imperial power and framed the ways in which it was expressed, the basic tenets of imperial power and its public display needed to be reviewed. Could the empire exist away from the city that lay at its core? Did the emperor retain his authority over all Christendom, when his actual power was so limited and he could no longer claim to be the guardian of so many Christian relics and shrines?

At its most abstract, the collapse and fragmentation of the Byzantine empire after 1204 raised questions about the very nature of Christian rule. The most fundamental of these was how a political, but quasi-theocratic entity, which claimed universal power over all Christendom, could continue to exist and function when divided. Must the secular and ecclesiastical realms embodied in Byzantium coincide? This issue primarily concerned theologians and clergymen, but it had important ramifications for political leaders. The key ecclesiastical figures of the period provided very different answers.²² Germanos II, patriarch in Nicaea (1223–40), saw these two complementary aspects of Christian power as indivisible and he exerted much effort to promote both secular and ecclesiastical universalism. This consequently meant that Germanos supported the Nicaean emperor John III Vatatzes's claims to power, since they would inevitably reflect on his own attempts to maintain the traditional, universal authority of the patriarchate. The opposing view was propounded, unsurprisingly, away from Nicaea, where rival emperors and clergymen were seeking

to enhance their own power in the new world order.

The alternative case was put forward most powerfully by Demetrios Chomatenos, archbishop of Ohrid (1216/7-c. 1236). He produced a different justification of Byzantine power in which the need for secular and ecclesiastical unity was avoided. Demetrios argued that so long as the patriarch was recognised by all, that Orthodoxy remained united, then the secular power could be divided. Universality depended on religious and not political unity. With one patriarch, the number of rulers was immaterial.²³ This alternative definition of the Orthodox world, of course, defended Chomatenos's own actions and authority. A divided empire had given him the opportunity to crown Theodore Komnenos Doukas as emperor in Thessaloniki, an unprecedented rise in the status of the archbishopric of Ohrid. Demetrios's acceptance of the patriarch's spiritual supremacy masked his delight in a new political reality. The coronation of Theodore had formalised the recognition of the new pretender, and so undermined the religious foundations, and even existence, of the Byzantine state. The new political world had first to be argued for in an ecclesiastical context. Similar arguments could, of course, be adopted by the emperors of Trebizond to justify their own claim to power.

The desire to claim universal authority also encouraged the rulers of Nicaea to enter negotiations with Rome for a union of the churches. The policy was first pursued by patriarch Germanos II, and had symbolic and practical aims. The symbolic purpose was to assert Germanos's patriarchal claim to parity with (if not superiority over) the pope and thereby give him universal spiritual authority over the eastern and western churches. The practical side of the measure was to remove papal support for the Latins in Constantinople and so hasten the fall of the city. The bitter nature of relations between the eastern and western churches over the previous centuries provoked great resistance to this policy. As early as 1220, John Apokaukos, metropolitan of Naupaktos in Epiros, condemned patriarchal plans to negotiate with Rome, and in later decades Nicaea's rivals were able to appeal to anti-union sentiment as a key element in their claim to imperial authority.²⁴ From a political point of view, the policy had important effects. John III Doukas Vatatzes managed to manoeuvre the negotiations so that they were dominated by the needs of imperial rather than patriarchal policy. This was later continued by Michael VIII Palaiologos, who was able to impose a settlement on the church at the council of Lyons in 1274.²⁵ Michael's negotiations and treaty with Rome allowed his rivals to give themselves greater authority as they cast themselves as guardians of Orthodoxy against Nicaean heresy. The internal rivals to church union threatened to recognise the emperors of Trebizond after the treaty.²⁶ From the mid 1240s, the

rulers of Epiros/Thessaloniki and also Trebizond were able to promote themselves as Orthodox in contrast to the rulers of Nicaea, and this became a key feature in their imperial identities.²⁷

For the rival emperors, the battle for legitimacy was fought in a different arena that had more specific goals: to assert their claims to the throne and to delineate their superiority over their rivals. From the surviving Nicaean texts it is possible to build up a detailed picture of the ways in which the political ideology was developed by its emperors between 1204 and 1261. It is this model that has been seen by modern historians as being the definition of Byzantine imperial identity in the thirteenth century. At its core lay traditional ideas about the emperor as God's vice-regent on earth. These were expounded through a rhetoric of continuity and renewal, which sought to create an image of an unbroken link with the past; an idea that was reinforced after the recapture of Constantinople.²⁸ For their coronations, the emperors of Nicaea conspicuously adhered to the old symbols of power and legitimacy, such as the raising aloft of the emperor on a shield at his coronation, which then placed their election in a hallowed, if partly fictive and interrupted, tradition going back to the fourth century.²⁹ The ceremony of anointing the emperor at his coronation also took on increased importance as the Nicaean emperor and his rivals all sought to claim divine legitimacy. There is debate whether the emperors of Nicaea innovated in this area by using chrism instead of oil, in an attempt to ensure that the Nicaean coronation ceremony was not upstaged by that in Latin Constantinople or Thessaloniki.³⁰ The patriarch had claimed the sole power to consecrate chrism, but the Latin emperor could turn to the new Latin patriarch to sanctify his own supply, and in Thessaloniki the myrrh that emerged from the tomb of St Demetrios was considered holy enough to use at coronation.

A similar moulding of the old and the new can be seen in the Nicaean alterations of the structures of Byzantine government. The emperors retained the established range of court ranks, titles and hierarchies, seeming to maintain the same old imperial structures and bureaucracy of government. But, as Angold has argued, the retention of these titles disguised a subtle but far-reaching transformation towards a far more efficient and simpler household system of government.³¹ The old rhetoric of Byzantine government was preserved but was adapted to fit the new administrative conditions. The concept of Byzantium superficially remained the same, but it was gradually being remodelled to match the circumstances of Nicaea. And as this definition of Byzantium came to mirror the actual state of Nicaea, so too did it exclude any alternative definitions being promoted by its rivals.

Ruth Macrides has noted that the Nicaean model of imperial rule was very subtly nuanced, and subject to constant change as successive emperors felt their way towards a construct of power and legitimacy that most closely suited them.³² John III Vatatzes and Theodore II Laskaris sought to explain their inheritance of power in different ways from the emperors of the previous thirty years. They did not exploit the rhetoric of renewal embodied in the idea of the 'new Constantine' which had been prevalent in previous centuries.³³ This was possibly in recognition of the disparity between their reduced circumstances and the powers embodied in the rhetoric of the claim. Instead, they sought to ground their power in the realities of their position and to re-establish the basis of their legitimacy. John III even re-evaluated the source of his power, looking to his subjects as much as to God. This produced some inconsistencies in his position. He paraded his own inheritance of power by proclaiming himself *porphyrogennetos* on his coins, but at the same time he refused to crown his son as co-emperor.³⁴ He said that imperial legitimacy could only come through the acclamation of the people.³⁵ Equally, the imperial finances were carefully harboured, and the emperor claimed not to be above the law.³⁶ It would appear that these emperors were trying to avoid the internal tensions caused by basing power purely on a Constantinopolitan model that no longer suited their current conditions. This approach found support in the writings of men such as Niketas Choniates and Nikephoros Blemmydes who explicitly blamed the loss of Constantinople on the corruption of its government and the degenerate lifestyle of the ruling class in the years up to 1204.³⁷

The recapture of Constantinople in 1261 saw an end to these experiments. Michael VIII Palaiologos was able to abandon these ideas and return to the established rhetoric of power. On his return to the city he immediately revived imperial processions and the cults of the greatest icons, notably that of the Theotokos Hodegetria, which had been kept by the Venetians in the Pantokrator monastery. He actively promoted himself as the new Constantine, the re-founder of Constantinople.³⁸ He even set up on a column a bronze statue of himself offering the city to the Archangel Michael, which echoed the early bronze imperial statues in the city, so many of which had been destroyed after 1204.³⁹ The tentative steps taken by his predecessors to re-assess the nature of imperial power, it seemed, could safely be ignored. Instead Michael preferred to do everything that he could to stress continuity with pre-1204 Constantinople, creating a fiction that the fall of the city had never taken place. The short-term effects of this were to diminish further the authority and standing of his rivals, but in the long term it failed to recognise the new realities of the empire.

A more significant change in the years 1204—61 came in the way the empire and its make-up were defined by the emperors of Nicaea and their patriarchs. The new definition was still one which saw the empire as the fountainhead of Christendom, with the patriarch (now resident in Nicaea) at its centre. However, it now also increasingly identified itself around a core of Hellenism. The rhetoric of political and theological universality was elided with a rhetoric of cultural exclusivity. As the terminology of the empire shifted to describe its subjects as *Hellenes* (Hellenes) in addition to *Rhomaioi* (Romans), so there was a shift in the self-perception of the empire itself. Until the twelfth century, 'Hellenic' had had a pejorative slant, a means of referring to the pagan, classical past in opposition to the Christian present. It now began to lose that negative aspect, and instead became a positive characteristic that could proclaim the unique heritage and longevity of civilisation inherited by the emperors of Nicaea. This transformation had begun in the twelfth century, but accelerated after 1204.⁴⁰ Theodore I Laskaris, writing about the ruins at Pergamon, even compared his own times unfavourably with those of classical Greece.⁴¹ Hellenism now became a key element in the identification of the Byzantine state, and came to be interpreted as an increasingly exclusive intellectual, territorial and even ethnic trait.⁴² This had both literary and physical manifestations. It excluded and alienated other ethnic groups within the empire, such as the Armenians around Troy, who then sought status through rebellion and alliance with the Latins. In 1205, this led to their massacre by Theodore I Laskaris.⁴³ John III Vatatzes and Theodore II Laskaris both enforced the conversion of Jews in Nicaea.⁴⁴ This attempt by the Nicaeans to restrict Byzantine legitimacy has been seen as an attempt to give themselves, and by implication the Byzantine empire, a Greek identity which could not be claimed by any of its other rivals. This policy seems to have begun as a way to give the Nicaeans a weapon against their Latin rivals in Constantinople, who from the 1240s at least, proclaimed a government free from any Greek taint.⁴⁵ However, it was expanded to be used against the empire's Greek rivals in Epiros/Thessaloniki and Trebizond. Epiros/Thessaloniki could be written out of the Hellenic polity because it lay beyond the Pindos mountains, which George Akropolites defined as the border of 'our Hellenic land'; and Trebizond could be excluded because of its largely non-Greek population.⁴⁶ An economic policy of self-sufficiency was also used to similar ends. The sumptuary laws of John III, which were primarily designed to protect domestic cloth production from western and Muslim imports, also served to help define the state and give it a sense of identity and independence.⁴⁷

The justification of imperial power that emerges from Nicaea in the

period of exile is one that was sophisticated but in flux. Its mixture of revivals of traditions and innovation, and the ways in which it subtly changed direction in order to suit changing political conditions demonstrate the care with which the image of power was cultivated.

We have less evidence for the imperial identity that was constructed in Epiros/Thessaloniki.⁴⁸ As has already been seen, the policy of the union of the eastern and western churches that was pursued in Nicaea allowed Theodore Komnenos Doukas and his successors to use the defence of Orthodoxy as a central feature of their argument for imperial legitimacy. It enabled them to promote themselves as the true defenders of the faith and so attract disaffected members of the Nicaean court. It also encouraged them to promote the independence of the church in their territory as a way of demonstrating their preservation of Orthodoxy. Theodore sought to deny the right of the patriarch to nominate bishops in his territory.⁴⁹

In general, it seems that the imperial identity of Epiros/Thessaloniki was largely determined in opposition to that established in Nicaea. This is perhaps unsurprising given that by the time that Theodore was crowned as emperor in 1225, Nicaea had already had eighteen years in which to develop its own ideology. The new emperors were always fighting to catch up with the aura of authority that the Nicaean emperors were able to exude. The result is that what little we know appears to be a defensive strategy, responding to what emerged elsewhere, rather than the result of any internal, coherent ideology. The evidence of coins and seals suggests that the emperors of Epiros/Thessaloniki attempted to promote their imperial credentials through a rhetoric of continuity, echoing Nicaea, although with less regard for the credibility of their claims.⁵⁰ Manuel Komnenos Doukas (1230–37), the weakest of the three Thessalonikan emperors, even commissioned coins showing himself with St Constantine, a comparison he could never live up to.⁵¹ The only major innovation that we know about is the exploitation of the power of the local cult of St Demetrios in Thessaloniki, one of the most popular and venerated saints in the Byzantine world. Demetrios frequently appears on the coins and seals of the rulers of Thessaloniki.⁵² The saint was also invoked in arguments about the legitimacy of imperial coronation in the city.⁵³ In general, Theodore, Manuel and John do not seem to have had the time or desire to produce an ideology with the subtlety and nuances of that in Nicaea. Presumably from 1225 to 1230, John relied on force of arms and the imminent recapture of Constantinople to support his case; and thereafter the claim was largely redundant.

Although John Komnenos Doukas was forced to renounce his imperial title in 1242, the territory of Epiros remained largely independent of Nicaea (and then Constantinople), and its rulers seem

to have taken over aspects of the imperial claim. Later despots were to adopt some of the trappings of imperial power and display at their capital at Arta, with the use of expensive imperial dress and mosaic.⁵⁴ They had briefly tried to go one step further, and the seal on a chrysobull from Vatopedi in 1247 records that Michael II of Epiros (1231–71) used the full imperial titles.⁵⁵ No other evidence supports this claim and this indicates the haphazard nature of the Epirote imperium.

The empire of Trebizond provides evidence of an alternative definition of Byzantium and Byzantine imperial power. This can be used to supplement those produced in Nicaea and Epiros/Thessaloniki, and to broaden arguments about the development of the ideal of Byzantium during the years of exile. This alternative definition is available by approaching the subject both from a different perspective and by using different evidence. The rival model of empire that was produced by the emperors of Trebizond was no less valid than that proclaimed in Nicaea, and by studying it now it is possible to examine the different pressures and tensions which underlay the construction of identity across the Byzantine world. Although Trebizond was cut off from Constantinople geographically, the model of imperial authority that was constructed by its emperors enabled it to act more influentially than its weak political position might at first sight lead one to believe. However, this study is more concerned with the emperors of Trebizond's perceptions of their power and their imperial pretensions than with the realities of their political position.



I View of Hagia Sophia at Trebizond from the south. The dominance of the south porch is very striking



II Distant view of Hagia Sophia from the east, as in 1963, when the church was still surrounded by tobacco fields. The raised position of

the site is clear. The Black Sea lies immediately to the right of this picture



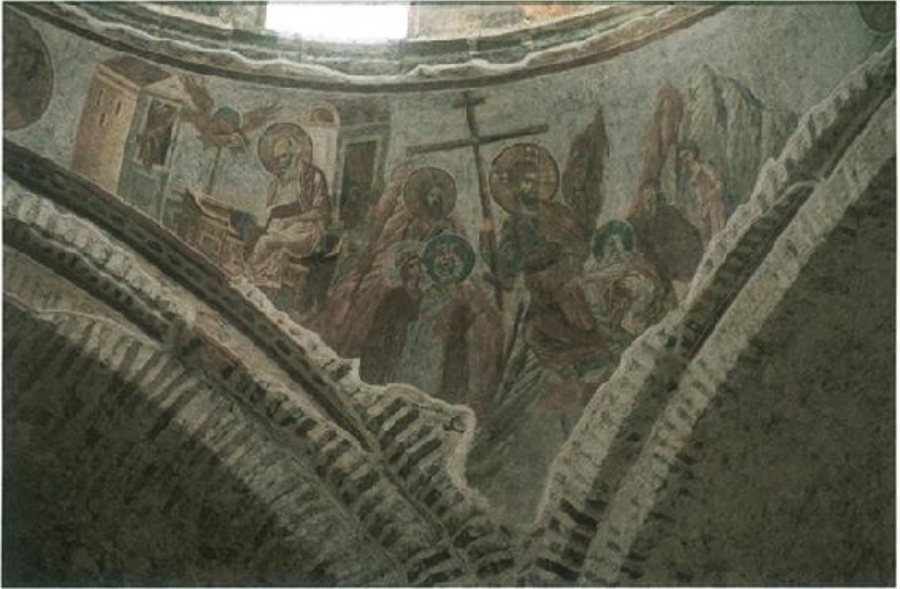
III General view of the interior of Hagia Sophia, east, looking towards the apse



IV The dome of Hagia Sophia. The zones of painting are visible, from the evangelists with accompanying Christological scenes in the pendentives, to the apostles and prophets in the drum, the host of worshipping angels above, and finally Christ Pantokrator (now almost lost) at the summit



V Hagia Sophia, north-east pendentive: St Matthew, the angel and the Crucifixion



VI Hagia Sophia, south-east pendentive: St Mark, the eagle and the Anastasis



VII Hagia Sophia, north-west pendentive: St Luke and, the bull and



VIII Hagia Sophia, south-west pendentive: St John, the lion and the Baptism



IX Hagia Sophia, north wall of bema: the Incredulity of Thomas (above) and Christ's appearance to the apostles by the Lake of

Tiberias (below)



X Hagia Sophia, south wall of bema: Christ's Mission to the Apostles. The right hand corner of the lower border is just visible



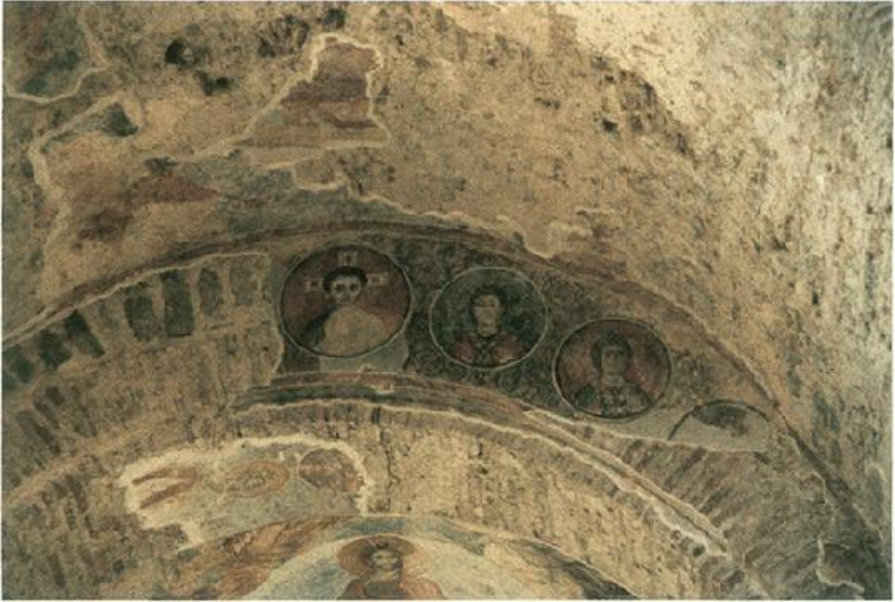
XI Hagia Sophia, vault of the apse: the Ascension. After the Pentecost, this is the largest scene in the church



XII Hagia Sophia: detail of the Ascension in the vault of the apse



XIII Mother of God and Christ child between archangels in conch of apse at Hagia Sophia



XIV Medallions of Christ Emmanuel and his ancestors (?) on triumphal arch in front of apse at Hagia Sophia. On the vault above, a small fragment of the mandorla around the hetoimasia in the Pentecost is visible



XV The Last Supper in the vault of the west arm of the naos at Hagia Sophia



XVI The Proclamation of the Word of God. The Apocalypse Vault in the central bay of the narthex at Hagia Sophia



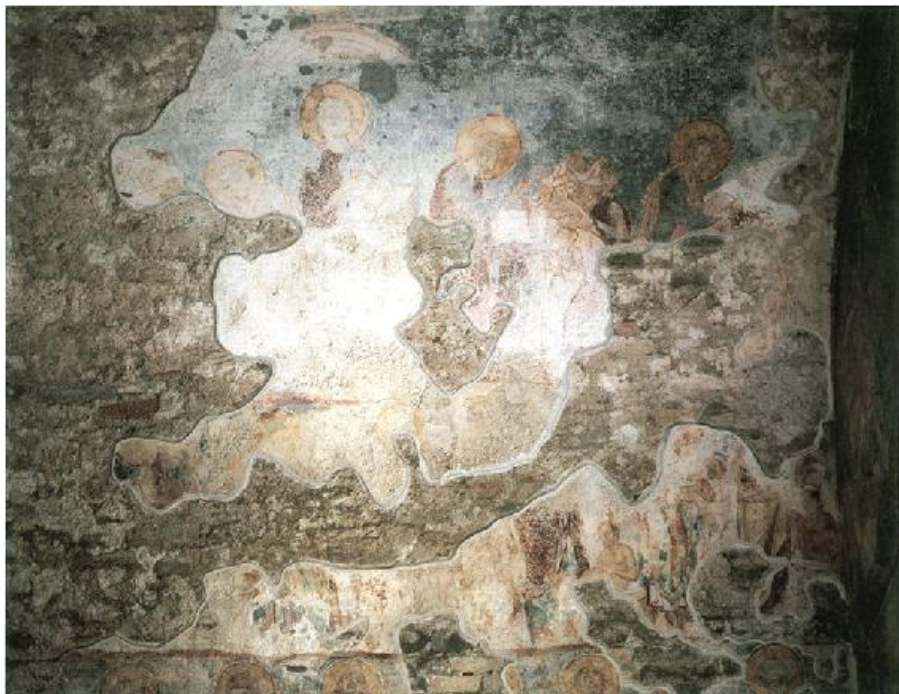
XVII The Annunciation and part of the Apocalypse Vault on the east side of the central bay of the narthex at Hagia Sophia



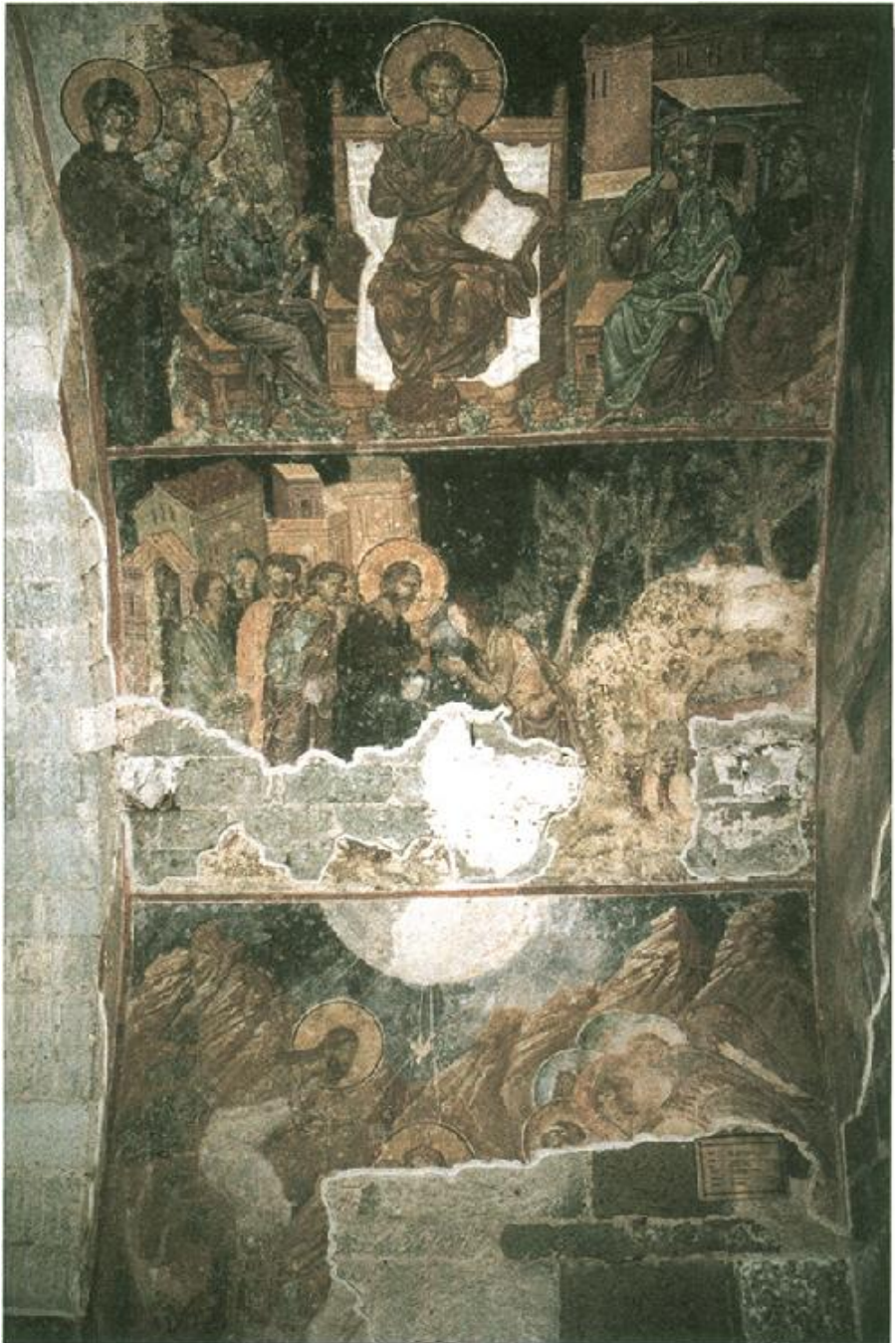
XVIII The feeding of the 5000, from the east wall of the north bay of the narthex at Hagia Sophia



XIX The Marriage Feast at Cana, from the west side of the vault in the south bay of the narthex at Hagia Sophia



XX The Mission to the Apostles on the west wall of the north porch at Hagia Sophia. The upper zone shows four apostles preaching, the lower zone eight apostles baptising the peoples of the world



[XXI](#) Christ Disputing with the Doctors in the Temple; Christ Healing the Blind man at the Pool of Siloam, and the upper portion of the Baptism of Christ from the east side of the south bay of the narthex at Hagia Sophia

This evidence for a new definition of Byzantium comes from sources that have largely been ignored by conventional historians: the material remains of the empire of Trebizond, and in particular the design and decoration of its churches. The art of Trebizond can provide important evidence for the maintenance of an alternative Byzantine ideal of power and identity through the years of exile. The result of this is a reassessment of Byzantine art and culture in this period that shows the divergent nature of ideas of identity and power in the thirteenth century as different factors influenced the development of the rival states. The art of Trebizond can provide a new, broader definition of Byzantium. It should be remembered that the Trapezuntine definition of Byzantine identity proved to be exceptionally successful, and enabled the pocket empire to outlive its rival in Constantinople until 1461.

One of the great problems with studying the years of exile that historians have faced is the lack of contemporary sources from outside Nicaea. The few histories that do survive force us to look through Nicaean eyes and vividly demonstrate that history is written by the victors. No thirteenth-century history survives from either Trebizond or Epiros/Thessaloniki.[56](#) The main sources about the thirteenth century in Trebizond, the chronicle of Michael Panaretos and Joseph Lazaropoulos's account of the miracles of St Eugenios, were both written over a century later.[57](#) However, when we turn to material remains the situation is reversed. Few buildings survive that can be connected with the rival empires of Epiros/Thessaloniki or Nicaea. For Nicaea, apart from the Laskarid fortifications, only a few scattered, minor churches and the empty shell of the imperial palace at Nymphaion still stand, although two larger foundations, the monastery of St Antony in Nicaea and the imperial funerary monastery at Sosandra are known from documentary sources.[58](#) Wall paintings may have been commissioned, but all are now lost.[59](#) Manuscripts do survive from the thirteenth century, some of which may have originated in Nicaea,[60](#) and the city certainly had a lively intellectual climate and active collectors of books, notably Nikephoros Blemmydes.[61](#) However, manuscripts do not share the ideology of display that is implicit in monumental art.

For Epiros/Thessaloniki there are more survivals, but almost all are associated with the later Despotate rather than the period of empire. In Thessaloniki, only a few repairs to the city wall now remain from

the period of the empire, and the circumstances of its emperors suggests that they would have had little time or money to devote to non-defence work.⁶² The mid-thirteenth-century churches in Arta do not seem to show an interest in displaying imperial power; they are very small, even the mausoleum church of Michael II is only just over 10m square.⁶³ Only the mosaics in the Paregoritissa at Arta demonstrate a later response to the need to display wealth, magnificence and power.⁶⁴

It is therefore difficult to reconstruct the ways in which the attributes of empire and the magnificence of imperial power were proclaimed in these two states. For Trebizond, however, we are much more fortunate. Three of the major churches of the city survive, its cathedral of the Panagia Chrysokephalos, the church of the major cult saint of Trebizond, St Eugenios (although both of these churches were partially remodelled in the fourteenth century, and still hide much beneath their modern Turkish whitewash), and Manuel I's church of Hagia Sophia. Fragments of the great palace in the citadel between the ravines also survive. These free us from the literary construction of Byzantium produced in Nicaea, and allow us to see how empire was proclaimed by one of the rival empires. In addition the coins of Manuel I Grand Komnenos and a reliquary of the True Cross that he commissioned provide further evidence from his reign. This book brings together all the known material evidence associated with Manuel I and the early empire.

This book primarily uses visual evidence as its source. Material remains are no less historical document than texts, but they are far less exploited. In the Byzantine world visual culture was a central component of society. It is well known that the public presentation of power through art, architecture, ceremonial and ritual was a fundamental aspect of imperial government.⁶⁵ To ignore the physical manifestations of Byzantine power is to neglect essential evidence. Hagia Sophia and the other buildings and objects examined in this book were created by imperial will, and provided a public display of imperial power. These were the major imperial commissions of the empire of Trebizond, concerned with the core activities of the state: the coronations and funerals of emperors, the housing of the imperial court and government, and the celebration of the liturgy. Buildings framed the emperor: they provided the settings and props for imperial rituals and ceremonials, they articulated the display of power in concrete form both to the empire's subjects and to its foreign visitors, and they provided a permanent record of imperial ambition and desire. At the same time, imagery on coins allowed imperial claims to be projected further afield. Public works embodied and expressed the political, ideological, theological and cultural concerns of the

emperors of Trebizond through every aspect of their design. The architectural design and location of buildings, the choice of materials, the incorporation of *spolia*, the selection of non-figurative decoration, as well as the choice and juxtaposition of inscriptions and figurative imagery all act as signifiers of identity.

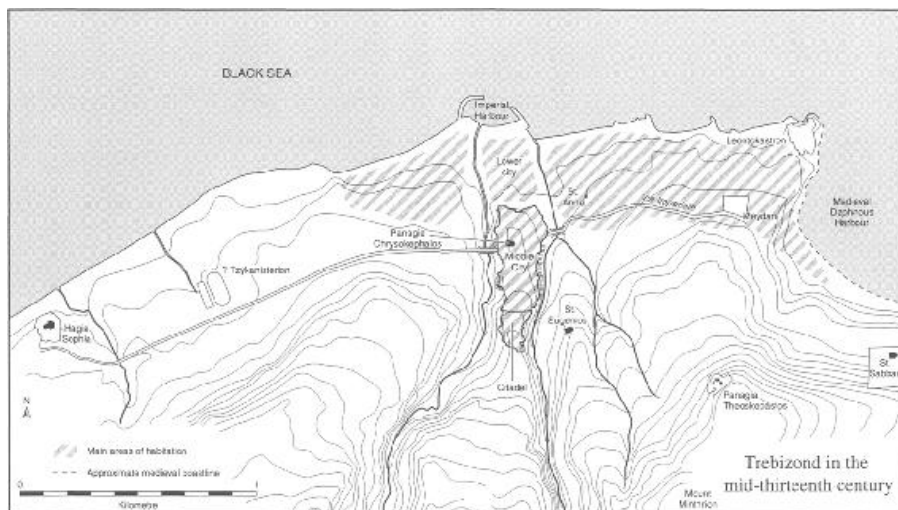
Chapter 1

Hagia Sophia and its contexts

The church of Hagia Sophia stands on an isolated spur of rock just above the Black Sea some two kilometres to the west of the citadel of Trebizond, the heart of the medieval city (Fig. 2). The church is now engulfed by a suburb of the city, enclosed by high-rise buildings and cut off from the sea by the coastal highway, but originally it stood on the edge of the water, well outside the medieval city. Photographs taken before it was surrounded by housing show the magnificent location of the church and how it dominated the fields around (plate II). It was a striking statement to mark the western approach to the imperial city of the Grand Komnenoi.

Every aspect of the external design and decoration of the church is unusual and stands outside the norms of Byzantine art and architecture. It is built of ashlar and its external form is dominated by three huge porches which precede the south, north, and west entrances to the church (plate I). The surface of the church is decorated with a range of sculptures and reliefs, including geometric and floral interlace plaques, and a long frieze depicting the story of the creation and fall of Man on the south porch, none of which find easy parallels in Byzantine art. Inside the church, extensive sections of the original wall paintings survive, but some aspects of the iconography are unique to this site. It has long been recognised that the unusual architectural form of the church, its diverse range of figural and decorative sculpture and wall paintings and their apparently eclectic combination, defy any simple categorisation: the 1968 publication of the church linked these various elements with Georgian, Armenian, Seljuq, Syrian as well as with Byzantine models and influences. The presence in one building of elements, motifs and styles associated with Constantinople, the Caucasus, and Anatolia, drawn from both Christian and Islamic artistic traditions, demands explanation. Trying to locate Trebizond within a notional mainstream

of Byzantine art, Cyril Mango concluded that: ‘The frescoes at St. Sophia are purely Byzantine; the architecture contaminated; the sculpture entirely alien’.¹ The image of the church that emerges from these accounts is of an essentially confused and eclectic building with mutually incompatible elements, which has little underlying rationale and the appearance of which was determined as much by accident as by design.



2 The city of Trebizond in the mid-thirteenth century. Hagia Sophia was located well to the west of the inhabited areas of the city

In this book, the ways in which both Talbot Rice and Mango characterised the church are challenged. Their interests in the extent of regional influence on the church, and the varying resilience of Byzantine style in the different arts of painting, sculpture and architecture remain a major concern, but different interpretations are offered. Rather than see the divergent nature of the many influences in purely artistic terms, I use them as evidence of the development of the empire of Trebizond under Manuel I Grand Komnenos and its ideology. This chapter outlines the various regional and international contexts into which all explanations and interpretations of the different elements of the church must be placed. With these contexts as a background, it is possible to establish a new and more nuanced gauge against which to judge the church.

By the time that the building and decoration of Hagia Sophia were completed, probably in the mid 1250s, the empire of Trebizond had undergone many changes since its foundation. Its status as independent state had been lost and regained on more than one

occasion, and the ambitions of its emperors had altered accordingly. Over the decades between 1204 and C.1250, the political and social contexts of the empire of Trebizond shifted constantly; all had an impact on the makeup of the empire, its ideology, ambitions and potential. The various overlapping geopolitical and cultural contexts within which the creation and functions of Hagia Sophia were determined are essential to its understanding. I have chosen here to emphasise questions about the cultural orientation of the empire of Trebizond and the relationship between political ambition and geopolitical reality, although I recognise that the selection of contexts necessarily limits the frames of interpretation that are applied to the church.²

Establishing a series of political and cultural contexts within which to examine the church and its decoration also raises questions about the relationship between art and political or cultural change. As an approach, such a structure contains within it an implicit presumption that the church is merely created in response to external forces. One of the key features of the church is the number of elements of its design and decoration that can be associated with the art of its neighbouring cultures, in addition to those that relate to elements within Byzantine and Constantinopolitan art. To what extent should we expect to see in the architecture and decoration of Hagia Sophia a reflection of the political realities of any particular time and to what extent is art an agent and creator of ideologies?

This question must be examined on many levels. First, all evidence of artistic interchange requires a model for interpretation. This can best be expressed in terms of a dichotomy between imitation and appropriation: does evidence of imitation of architectural forms, sculptural motifs or iconography and painting styles tell us about the influences that were brought to bear on the empire or about the ways in which its emperors appropriated what they found around them? Either approach makes assumptions about conscious decisions made by artists and patrons. The idea of influence, prevalent in Talbot Rice's interpretation of the church, establishes a model of passivity and inferiority, in which ideas and motifs are consumed either with little thought about or with little control over their appearance. Through this interpretative model, the decoration of Hagia Sophia emerges as just the imprint of the serial subjugations to which the empire was subjected. The alternative model, that of ideas being appropriated by artists and patrons, suggests a more self-conscious and carefully determined desire to bring diverse elements together to create a new vision of power or piety in Trebizond.³ As each element of the church is studied in the following chapters, the evidence in favour of each view can be assessed.

The model of appropriation, however, still implies an intentionalist reading of the church: it sees the agglomeration of forms as the specific result of predetermined aims. Undoubtedly some elements of the church must have been carefully thought through and self-consciously fashioned. This is certainly the case with the donor portrait of Manuel I Grand Komnenos, the most explicit projection of power in the church, which is examined in [chapter 8](#); but it may also be true of aspects of the architecture and decoration. It is harder to accept that all elements in the church were subject to the same level of scrutiny or programmatic order. Many of the minor, decorative elements in the church, such as the painted borders between scenes, mouldings or some of the sculptural roundels, must have been determined by less deliberative processes, which are not adequately described by the paradigms of passive influence or more active appropriation. The form and appearance of these features can be ascribed to the requirements of functionality and necessity, and can be seen as responses to unavoidable limitations. Restrictions on the availability of materials and craftsmen and on access to knowledge of artistic developments elsewhere, and demands imposed by location and climate also play their part in the organisation and appearance of the church, as does the degree of freedom granted to artists to execute elements outside direct patronal control. Whilst none of these aspects, which lie outside the normal 'programmatic' elements, can be used to build up a picture of a conscious expression of imperial ideology, they are nevertheless valuable evidence for perceptions of empire within Trebizond and the ways in which it adapted to local circumstances. They provide implicit evidence about the backgrounds and expectations of the artists involved in the church and consequently of the audience that they considered themselves to be addressing. Such a picture cannot be built up by seeking to locate the exact 'source' of any motif, or by identifying the geographic, ethnic or religious origins of the anonymous artists involved, and using these to quantify the impact of the cultures that impinged on Trebizond. The portability and circulation of ideas and the level of interchange are more important than their classification.⁴ Rather, they can be used to build up a picture of the nature of the empire, its cultural orientation and homogeneity, and its frames of reference by exploring the range of motifs and their cultural associations.

Questions about imperial and cultural identity, then, are built up through the layering of two different forms of evidence, explicit records of conscious ideology and implicit evidence of non-programmatic production. By placing these in the various geopolitical and cultural contexts that enveloped the empire of Trebizond, it is possible to see the extent to which the imperial buildings reflect

existing political realities and the degree to which they actively create and encapsulate a new ideology of empire. It is important to consider not just questions of what ideas and ideologies are built into the church and its decoration, but how those ideas were determined, and by whom.

Consideration of contexts provides a framework for an analysis of the relationship between patron, artists and audiences. Paramount in this is a consideration of the role of the monument as an encapsulation of social memory.⁵ This moves discussion away from the church as a simple vehicle of imperial propaganda to a more complex and dynamic negotiation between competing ideas and audiences about the nature of power and piety in Trebizond in this period. The church can be interpreted as a collective embodiment of ideas about empire in which the design of the church is seen not as a scheme imposed from above by patron or designer, but rather as a project which seeks to match wider expectations of empire. This approach suits the diverse nature of the decoration of the church, and allows non-self-conscious elements to be fully exploited as evidence of the external pressures that were brought to bear on imperial aspirations.

This requires us to challenge the normal, simple models of patronal control and influence, in which, in the case of medieval art, the patron takes over from the [anonymous] artist as the creator of the work, whose intentions can be used to explain the monument. It is important to question the degree of imperial control over the design of Hagia Sophia. The combination of explicit and implicit forms of evidence reveals as much about non-imperial expectations as about centralised propaganda. The self-consciously fashioned elements clearly present an official view of the emperor and his vision of empire. The less formal elements portray a more complicated picture, in which the visual languages employed by artists can be seen to represent non-imperial perceptions of how power and piety should be represented. The concept of empire expressed in these elements is one that possibly constrained and directed the ways in which Manuel I ultimately had to portray his power. According to this model, the church can be seen as much as a manifestation of the long history of Pontic independence and local autonomy as of Manuel's own imperial claims. It can be argued that the Grand Komnenoi were accepted as emperors in Trebizond and survived in power because their presence acted to legitimise existing local autonomous power structures. Manuel provided a fig-leaf of Byzantine imperialism to cover this regional independence, but the presentation of his rule had to adapt to accommodate it. Hagia Sophia provides the evidence of the results of this negotiation.

The imperial ideology that can be read into the church cannot exist in isolation, whether from the craftsmen that built Hagia Sophia, the people that proclaimed it, or from those that viewed it. The degree to which local factors, including the ethnicity of artists and subjects, and the local traditions for the depiction and expression of power, helped to determine the appearance of Hagia Sophia is central to our understanding of it. The weight given to the various overlapping audiences of the church – the emperor and court, the clergy, the citizens of Trebizond, Manuel’s other subjects outside his capital, as well as its different foreign audiences, whether diplomats or traders, Christians or Muslims – must also be taken into consideration. This has an effect on the ways in which the various elements of the church are interpreted. Emphasis placed on those aspects of the church that are usually ascribed to Constantinople or the mainstream of Byzantine culture, notably the wall paintings, must be balanced against evidence about who had the knowledge to produce them, and who, in thirteenth-century Trebizond, would have understood or recognised them. In contrast, emphasis placed on elements of local origin must be considered against Manuel’s imperial proclamations.

In order to study all these questions, the succeeding chapters look at different aspects of the church: its architecture, its role in the city of Trebizond, its sculptural decoration and its wall paintings. This chapter outlines the principal contexts within which all these are set.

Trebizond and Constantinople

Manuel’s self-proclaimed title in his donor portrait in the church, ‘faithful emperor and autocrat of the Romans’ establishes the prime context for the analysis of Hagia Sophia: Constantinople, and the revival of the Byzantine empire. One of the premises of this book is that the emperors of Trebizond sought to display themselves as Byzantine emperors, and that all the art and buildings in the city served to help achieve this. The issue that remains is the way in which they perceived that such an ideology of Byzantine imperial power should be manifested in Trebizond.

The early history of the empire suggests that the relationship of Trebizond and its emperors to Constantinople was an ambivalent one. The creation of an empire in Trebizond was a haphazard, evolutionary affair.⁶ When Alexios I Grand Komnenos and his brother David, the grandsons of emperor Andronikos I Komnenos (1183–85), first arrived in the city in April 1204, imperial designs were unlikely. They came to Trebizond from the east, from Georgia, where they had been brought up at the court of its formidable ruler, queen Tamar (1184–1210)⁷ *The*

Life of Jamar, king of kings, the principal Georgian history of this period, records that the aim of their military expedition was not to establish an empire but to punish the emperor Alexios IV Angelos for his raid on a shipment of money from queen Tamar to the monasteries of the Black Mountain and Mount Athos.⁸ Indeed, Alexios, David and their Georgian troops set out before Constantinople had fallen to the Latins of the Fourth Crusade. Although the raid may have been trying to take advantage of the instability around Constantinople, it can only be understood in terms of Georgian adventurism: the presence of the Komnenoi brothers exploited the historic links between their family and the regions of Pontos and Paphlagonia; they would have made good, locally-acceptable client rulers for the Bagratid rulers of Georgia.⁹ In this way, it was an empire born in the tit-for-tat of Caucasian border politics. This was radically different from its rival empire in Nicaea which was a direct transplantation of the court and bureaucracy from Constantinople, after the fall of the city in 1204. In Trebizond, empire had to be created from first principles.

The fall of Constantinople coincided with the brothers' arrival in Trebizond and this changed their situation radically. Alexios found himself *de facto* emperor, and he established himself in Trebizond. He may not have styled himself emperor immediately, but he seems to have adopted the epithet *megas* [great/grand] to his surname to emphasise his descent from his grandfather Andronikos I Komnenos before 1212.¹⁰ He does not seem to have made any move on Constantinople itself, instead this was attempted by his brother David who, taking advantage of the chaos at the centre of the empire, pressed on towards the great city. He led an army as far as Pontic Herakleia and established himself as ruler of Paphlagonia, but once there further progress was stopped by Theodore Laskaris, emperor of Nicaea. Theodore gradually whittled away at David's lands, and in 1211 or 1212, captured him and exiled him as a prisoner monk at Vatopedi on Mount Athos, where he died.¹¹ As a claim to empire, David's expedition seems no more credible or authoritative than those of the various other adventurers who emerged after 1204.¹²

Any ambitions that Alexios may have had to follow his brother towards Constantinople were ended by the capture of the Black Sea port of Sinope in 1214 by the Seljuq sultan Izz al-Din Kay Kawus I (1211–20). This both cut off the land route between Trebizond and Constantinople; and resulted in the capture of Alexios, who was made prisoner of the sultan.¹³ To free himself, Alexios was compelled to pay tribute to the sultan and accept him as overlord. It ended any realistic chance of the Grand Komnenoi regaining Constantinople, and reduced the empire to a vassal state.

The early defeats, first of David and then Alexios, in the military

battle for Constantinople seem to have acted as the spur for the start of a symbolic war to possess the city and all it stood for. It is from the period after 1214 that we see the first attempts to remodel Trebizond, to build new palaces and churches and to fit the city out as a suitable imperial centre, a new Constantinople. This began with Alexios's rebuilding of the cathedral of the Panagia Chrysokephalos as coronation church. At first sight this looks to be a piece of pseudo-imperial bombast, an attempt to disguise weakness behind a façade of hollow magnificence, as it in no way reflected Alexios's vassalship to the Seljuqs, but it may rather have been part of a wider-ranging change in imperial policy. The clear failure of force of arms required Alexios to remodel his claim to empire, and to base it around ceremony and solemnity. His successors, notably his son-in-law, Andronikos I Gidon (1222–35), who rebuilt and expanded the imperial palace between the ravines, and his grandson, Manuel I Grand Komnenos (1238–63), builder of Hagia Sophia, can be seen to have continued these building campaigns. Through these concrete manifestations of power the imperial identity of the Grand Komnenoi began to emerge.

It is clear that the relationship between Trebizond and Constantinople was characterised by absence. The Grand Komnenoi did not know Constantinople at first hand. The imperial buildings in Trebizond had, necessarily, to be developed if not in ignorance of those in Constantinople, at least without direct first-hand knowledge of them. The first emperor, Alexios, and his brother David, had both fled Constantinople as infants, in the aftermath of the killing of their grandfather, Andronikos I Komnenos, and the blinding of their father, the *sebastokrator* Manuel. No subsequent emperor returned to visit Constantinople before John II Grand Komnenos in 1282, at which time, according to George Pachymeres at least, he agreed to accept lesser titles and attributes.¹⁴ The image of empire that is presented at Trebizond, then, is one reconstructed from secondary sources, filtered through intermediaries, and built on memories. It is the triumph of invention over intimate knowledge, and is coloured by local imagination of what an imperial city should be. It is for this reason that knowledge of the links between the empire and its immediate neighbours becomes of increasing importance when we turn to examine the church of Hagia Sophia, as does evidence about the origins of the artists and craftsmen involved in its construction. It was these contacts and these artists that determined the nature and accuracy of Manuel's imperial pretensions.

Trebizond, Anatolia and the Caucasus

The early history of Trebizond was closely tied to that of the kingdom of Georgia, the most powerful Christian state in eastern Anatolia. By 1204, queen Tamar of Georgia had expanded her proto-empire to include northern Armenia, held by the Armeno-Georgian Mqargrdzeli family, and she additionally claimed the Saltuqid emirs of Erzurum and the Mengujekid sultans of Erzincan as vassals.¹⁵ *The Life of Tamar, king of kings* says simply that Tamar ‘offered’ Trebizond and the Pontos to Alexios;¹⁶ and no doubt she expected her protégés in Trebizond to assume a similarly subservient relationship.

The question remains of how long such a relationship lasted. In the 1220s Georgia was still claiming Trebizond as a vassal, but there is no other evidence to support this.¹⁷ Diplomatic ties between Georgia and Trebizond continued throughout the century, including the marriage of Manuel I Grand Komnenos to a Georgian princess, Rusudan. But this was matched by hostile contacts, including invasions of the eastern provinces of the empire, Lazica, by Davit VI Narin in 1241, and again in 1282.¹⁸

If Georgia was instrumental in the early history of the empire of Trebizond, and therefore one major audience for its expressions of independent power, it was soon overtaken by the Seljuq Sultanate of Rum in Anatolia, with its capital at Konya/Ikonion. Izz al-Din Kay Kawus I’s capture of Alexios in 1214 gave the empire a new overlord, and required Alexios and his successors to pay their Seljuq lords an annual tribute of ‘10,000 dinars, 500 horses, 200 cows, 10,000 sheep and 50 loads of precious gifts’.¹⁹ There is even evidence from the Arabic chronicle of Ibn al-Athir that Alexios had been paying tribute to the preceding Seljuq sultan, Ghiyath al-Din Kay Khusraw I, as early as 1205/6.²⁰ It is clear that some of the Seljuq claims over Trebizond competed with those of the Georgians.

The period of Seljuq vassalship ended in 1223 after the defeat of an attack on the city by a Seljuq army led by a man known only as *Melik*.²¹ After his victory, Andronikos I Gidon was able to re-establish his independence. However, this did not last long and he slowly lost lands and fortresses to the Seljuq sultan, Ala al-Din Kay Qubadh I (1220–37).²² In 1230/31 he sought to re-establish his power by siding with the Khwarazmians of Central Asia, under their shah Jelal ad-Din, who invaded Anatolia and sought to take over the lands of the Seljuqs. The Khwarazmians were routed in a battle at Khlāt, and once more Andronikos was forced to pay tribute to the Seljuqs, this time 200 lances.²³ It was only the arrival of the Mongols and the calamitous defeat of the army of the Seljuqs and their allies at the battle of Köseadağ in 1243 that altered this relationship, as the Seljuqs struggled ever to recover their former power. As with their relationship with Georgia, the emperors of Trebizond sought marriage alliances and

diplomatic ties with the Seljuqs, and these were aided by their common mutual interest in trade.²⁴

Talbot Rice argued that elements of the architecture and decoration of Hagia Sophia derived from both Georgian and Seljuq origins, and saw in this a political relationship between these states. They certainly indicate that contact between all these cultures continued in the 1250s. However, that need not reflect a hierarchical relationship between each state's rulers. The church allows us to study the cultural orientation of the empire of Trebizond, and to see the degree to which art, piety and power were developed in association with Caucasian and Anatolian cultures. The requirement for the emperors of Trebizond to look east as much as west in their diplomacy suggests a need for them to tailor their presentation of power as much around local perceptions of power as Constantinopolitan ones. This will be an important consideration when looking at the evidence of regional architectural and decorative elements in Hagia Sophia.

Manuel's need to consider local audiences was reinforced by internal factors in the empire, notably the ethnicity of its inhabitants. Although the court at Trebizond was Greek, and the empire attracted Greek scholars in the early fourteenth century, such as the astronomers Gregory Chioniades and George Chrysokokkes, evidence suggests that this Greekness was confined to a core of the urban elite.²⁵ In its large eastern regions away from Trebizond, there were populations of Laz and Tzan, ethnic Caucasian groups.²⁶ The surviving charters from the monastery of Vazelon, which lay to the south of Trebizond, include large numbers of these non-Greek names among the donors that they list.²⁷ The character of the empire was further changed by the mass immigration of Armenians into Trebizond after the sack of Ani by the Mongol khan Chamarghan in 1239, and by Syriac groups from Mesopotamia. This again opened the empire to new possibilities in terms of trade and an alternative source of artists and craftsmen, but equally it presented yet another new audience – ethnically, culturally and religiously distinct – for the Grand Komnenoi to address. These demographic facts must have had an important impact on how the empire could be perceived both by its rulers and subjects. The art of Trebizond emerges as a negotiation not just between the ambitions and political realities of the Grand Komnenoi, but also between these different ethnic, cultural and religious groups.

Trebizond, the Mongols and trade

The most immediate context for the church of Hagia Sophia is the

Mongol invasion of Anatolia. The battle of Köseadağ in 1243 totally altered the social and political structures of Anatolia and the Caucasus.²⁸ The hegemony enjoyed by the Seljuqs in Rum was destroyed, and the kingdom of the Bagratids in Georgia was split. This created a power vacuum in the region as authority was fragmented into many local fiefdoms. Manuel was able to exploit this as his territory was left largely untouched by the invaders in return for tribute taxes. Manuel, although still a vassal – now of the Mongols – was at least on a level footing with the rulers around him. In 1246 he travelled to the *kuriltai* [great meeting] of the new khan, Güyük, at Karakorum, as the equal of the sultan of Rum, the two kings of Georgia, the sultan of Erzurum and the emir of Aleppo, where he received a *yarligh* [decree] confirming his rulership.²⁹ This altered Manuel's position and his perception of it. It certainly gave him new opportunities, for the arrival of the Mongols also altered the trade routes across Asia, to Trebizond's benefit. There was a major shift in trade routes to the north, away from Baghdad and Syria, towards Tabriz and Trebizond, which now flourished as the easternmost port the caravans could reach.³⁰ This encouraged the establishment of Venetian and Genoese trading stations in the city.³¹ The income from this increased trade was almost certainly supplemented by the exploitation of silver mines around Argyria and Bayburt.³² The results of Manuel's wealth can be seen not only in the magnificence of Hagia Sophia, but also in the quantity of silver coins that was produced in his reign. Manuel's coins gained international significance and were to be copied as the standard currency in Georgia for many years to come: the *kyrmanuli*.³³ This wealth seems to have allowed Manuel to expand and improve his army, which in turn allowed him to revive the imperial ambitions of the Grand Komnenoi, perhaps even raising his sights as high as Constantinople. Manuel sought to establish himself on the international stage, proposing a marriage alliance with Louis IX of France.³⁴ In 1253, the Trapezuntine army recaptured Sinope, the first key city in any western expansion, suggesting that once again, the emperors of Trebizond were beginning to turn their eyes to the recapture of Constantinople.³⁵ The change in circumstances in Trebizond is apparent in the brief account of Manuel's reign in Panaretos' chronicle, in which the emperor is called the 'expert general' and 'most prosperous ruler'.³⁶

This suggests a grander stage setting for Hagia Sophia than the local contexts of Anatolia and the Caucasus. It places Trebizond back on the wider international stage, a matter that can be explored through the wall paintings in the church, which are often ascribed to Constantinopolitan artists. However, behind this façade of confidence and westward ambition, there is evidence that the Mongol invasions

in fact rooted Trebizond ever more deeply in the near eastern world. The trade that enriched Manuel and his empire forced him to comply with local needs. In the early fourteenth century the merchant Francesco Balducci Pegolotti, working for the Florentine merchant firm of Bardi, recorded that 'Il peso e la misura di Torisi [Tabriz] è tutt'uno con quello di Trabisonda'.³⁷ The same seems to have been true of Trebizond's coins, and hoards of Trapezuntine coins have been found in Tabriz.³⁸ While Manuel may have looked west, his empire looked ever more firmly to the east.

Trebizond and historiography

The final context in which to consider Hagia Sophia and the empire of Trebizond is that established for it by its contemporaries. One of the major factors to emerge from any attempt to write the early history of the empire of Trebizond is the paucity of sources for the thirteenth century. It is this lack of references that is one of the main arguments for the irrelevance of the empire to Byzantine (or indeed any) history. However, in the case of Trebizond the silence of the sources is an issue which itself needs to be investigated. Clearly, the loss of internal documents from Trebizond itself is a major factor, but the ways in which the empire is portrayed in other Greek sources provides further evidence about the status of Trebizond in the thirteenth century.

The origins of the dismissive accounts of the empire of Trebizond, which so influenced George Finlay, are to be found in the primary sources for the Greek world of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. It is in these that we first find a picture of a minor kingdom with excessive pretensions: a state that is effectively a local apparition of no international significance, and a society ruled by ineffectual and deficient rulers. Indeed, in the Greek sources, Trebizond barely emerges in the torrent of events that lead up to and beyond the recapture of Constantinople. Superficially, the empire appears as an outsider, caught up in its own affairs and turned in on its own regional politics. However, as Jacob Fallmerayer, the first historian of the empire, noted in 1827, these chronicles were written in Nicaea or Constantinople by the rivals of Trebizond, and by the ultimate victors in the race for the imperial throne.³⁹

The Byzantine chroniclers of this period had no need or interest in recording activities so far to the east of the court in which they were based. Rather, their incentive, if not their political instruction, was to marginalise the empire, to demonstrate its insignificance and its irrelevance, and to prove that it could never have a credible claim to the many imperial titles and attributes that its emperors gave

themselves. Other possible sources of information, the Syriac and Persian histories of Bar Hebraeus or Ibn Bibi, or the Georgian chronicles of the Bagratid dynasty, also direct their attention elsewhere and serve their own political masters. Trapezuntine historians have not helped the cause of their own empire. No chronicle written in Trebizond in the thirteenth century survives, and the principal history of the empire, that of Michael Panaretos, has to look back from the second half of the fourteenth century. Panaretos's writing is laconic to the point of obtuseness, and only provides curt and selective accounts of the early rulers of the empire: indeed the years 1204 to 1282 take up just 57 lines.

The history that has been recorded, then, is that of the victors and the rivals. The tone is set by Niketas Chômâtes who, writing in about 1210, provides the earliest record of events in Trebizond. He notes only that Alexios I Grand Komnenos established himself in Trebizond and then disappeared: 'his name was invoked but he was never seen'.⁴⁰ He goes on to compare Alexios to Hylas, the mysterious companion of Jason and the Argonauts who disappeared without trace en route to Colchis. This learned allusion provided a model that other writers were to follow. George Akropolites, the major writer of the later thirteenth century, also minimises the existence of a rival empire in Trebizond. How better to marginalise the empire than simply by ignoring it? Both he and Choniates are more interested in the Paphlagonian adventure of David Komnenos than with events in Trebizond itself. However, the few references to Trebizond in the chronicles, as well as the omissions, can be deconstructed to give some impression of the ways in which the emperors of Trebizond could exert their power and prestige.

At one level, there is a simple correspondence between the threat offered by the Grand Komnenoi and the way they are recorded by the writers and encomiasts of Nicaea. It is in the years before 1212, when the Grand Komnenoi presented a credible military threat to Theodore Laskaris, the emperor in Nicaea, that their power was dismissed most vehemently. Niketas Choniates, in his *Panegyric* of Theodore I Laskaris, (perhaps unsurprisingly) calls the founders of the empire, Alexios and his brother David, the lads of the Pontos', effeminately 'nurtured in the shade'.⁴¹ This, the one real comment on their rule, seeks to define the Grand Komnenoi as being the antitheses of good rulers, lacking birth, nobility, strength, openness and straightforwardness.⁴² At the same time, in other orations, Theodore Laskaris's own much flimsier links to the Komnenian dynasty are paraded throughout the text and he is also compared to Alexander, Achilles and David.⁴³

In other early Palaiologan chronicles, the rulers of Trebizond are

similarly disparaged, but in ways that are more insidious. Firstly, they are very rarely described as emperors; instead they are called merely rulers, princes or tyrants.⁴⁴ George Akropolites calls Alexios the ruler of Trebizond;⁴⁵ for Nikephoros Gregoras he was ruler of Colchis;⁴⁶ and for George Pachymeres, the prince of the Laz.⁴⁷ By the end of this process in Palaiologan historiography, Trebizond was neither an empire nor even a Greek state at all.

The ways in which the rulers of Trebizond are demeaned in these texts suggests that one of greatest problem that their rivals faced was how to counteract the allure of their name: Komnenos. As descendants of the Byzantine emperor Andronikos I Komnenos, the Grand Komnenoi came from the most prestigious imperial family of the age, which had ruled the empire for more than a century. The family retained a residue of popular support in Constantinople and the Pontos, and in the 1210s, writers like Niketas Choniates were already looking back on the reigns of the early Komnenian emperors as a lost golden age. Their name also gave the Grand Komnenoi their strongest claim to the throne after its loss to the forces of the Fourth Crusade in 1204. Both the rulers of Epiros/Thessaloniki and Nicaea made great play of their descent from ruling families, the former calling themselves the Komnenos-Doukas, and Michael VIII revelling in the quadruple surname Komnenos Angelos Doukas Palaiologos.⁴⁸ This could not match the impeccable family credentials of the Grand Komnenoi, and what few records survive that were produced by them make it clear that they played this card for all it was worth, notably the addition of the epithet *megas* by 1212. David Grand Komnenos also emphasised the imperial colour of purple in his seals and inscriptions, continually proclaiming his imperial ancestry: he calls himself **πορφυροβλάστου βασιλεγγόνου πορφυρανθής** ‘purple-sprung’ and ‘grandson of an emperor’ on seals,⁴⁹ and **πορφυρανθής** ‘bloom of the purple’ on an inscription on the walls of his city of Herakleia.⁵⁰ No opportunity was lost to remind everyone who the legitimate heirs to Constantinople were.

It was this link of direct descent from the imperial purple, a claim their rivals could not so easily make, that made the Grand Komnenoi a force to be feared, and one that needed to be neutralised as effectively as possible. When we turn to the appearance of the Grand Komnenoi in Byzantine chronicles, the manner of their depiction is immediately apparent. Little mention is made of their parentage or illustrious family: imperial connections are expunged. There is a clear sensitivity to the imperial terminology adopted by the Grand Komnenoi themselves. While ignored as a political force after 1214 and sidelined in chronicles, the self-proclamation of the rulers of Trebizond as ‘pious Emperor and Autocrat of the Romans’ still threatened the parvenu

rulers of Nicaea and then Constantinople.⁵¹ Michael VIII Palaiologos sent repeated embassies to Trebizond in the early 1280s to persuade John II Grand Komnenos – ‘that arrogant barbarian’ – to abandon the imperial purple and titles and accept the lesser position of despot of Trebizond, with the lure of a marriage alliance to the new emperor’s third daughter, but it took two years to persuade him.⁵²

Seen against the background of the Nicaeans’ increasing use of Hellenism to define their polity against that of their neighbours and rivals, the tone of these attacks becomes clear.⁵³ The rulers of Trebizond (as well as the Latins of Constantinople and the Greeks of Epiros) were being explicitly excluded from the new definition of Byzantium. By recasting them as rulers of the foreign they could be marginalised; their Hellenism was taken from them, and with it their justification for power. The Greek culture of Trebizond, already sidelined by distance from Constantinople, was now beyond the cultural boundary of Theodore I Laskaris’s Greek oikumene. The Greek scholars who worked in Trebizond are effectively excluded and downgraded by the removal of the city into the alien realm of Caucasian civilisation, with all the connotations of otherness that that held for Byzantines. Colchis, of course, was the land beyond the edge of the known world to which Jason led the Argonauts in his search for the legendary Golden Fleece. At an earlier period in his *History* Niketas Choniates had used Lazica as an alienating device to insult Andronikos I Komnenos.⁵⁴ The conflicting aspects of the decoration of Hagia Sophia, with its inspirations in Seljuq, Georgian and Armenian art, as well as Byzantine must be seen against this background.

It was only later, when writers such as Laonikos Chalkokondyles looked back on the loss of all the Greek empires in the 1480s, that the position of Trebizond was reversed and the Greekness of the empire emerged again: since then they have been reigning there up to our time, being Greeks by origin and preserving Greek customs as well as the Greek tongue’.⁵⁵ By then it was too late.

Chapter 2

Hagia Sophia: architecture and the construction of identity

The church of Hagia Sophia was originally at the centre of a monastic complex, of which nothing now survives. A photograph by Gabriel Millet of 1893 records the existence of a vaulted, two-storey gatehouse at the southwest corner of the site.¹ It must have been one of many structures that made up a walled compound around the church, as Finlay noted on his visit in 1850 how well fortified the site was.² All are now lost. Being so far from the walls of the city itself, Hagia Sophia required a high level of protection from the Seljuq and Georgian raids to which Trebizond was subject throughout the thirteenth century. The combination of the outcrop of rock on which the church stands and man-made fortifications would have provided this. The significance of the location of the church is examined in the following chapter.

Within the walled compound, Hagia Sophia was much the largest and most imposing building (Fig. 3).³ Indeed, it is one of the largest constructions in the Byzantine world in this period. Including the porches, which are so integral to the external appearance of the church (and which are discussed below), Hagia Sophia measures 35 x 27 m (31 x 14 m for the naos and narthex alone). The height to the top of the dome is some 18.5 m. This makes Hagia Sophia much larger than most comparable Byzantine and Caucasian monuments of the period. No churches on a similar scale seem to have been built by the emperors of Nicaea.⁴ Equally, the churches built elsewhere in the

Orthodox world at this time by those states with imperial pretensions are all also appreciably smaller. Royal foundations, such as Qintsvisi and Pitareti in Georgia,⁵ or Studenica and Sopocani in Serbia,⁶ cannot match Hagia Sophia in size. Even the church of the Forty Martyrs in Trnovo, which was explicitly built to celebrate Bulgarian ascendancy after Ivan II Asen's victory over Theodore Komnenos Doukas at Klokotnitsa in 1230, is considerably smaller.⁷ Instead, Hagia Sophia is on a par with the greatest imperial commissions of the twelfth century in Constantinople, such as John II Komnenos's Pantokrator monastery.⁸ For the thirteenth century, the only comparisons in terms of scale are to be found in other buildings in Trebizond. The Panagia Chrysokephalos, the cathedral of the city, which was rebuilt by emperor Alexios I Grand Komnenos, is also over 35 m long (excluding the exonarthex, which is probably a later addition) (Fig. 4). The other major church in the city, which was dedicated to St Eugenios, the city's patron saint and spiritual defender, was also rebuilt in the thirteenth century, and measures 28.5 x 19 m (Fig. 5). Building on such a scale provides some evidence of the importance of public building to the Grand Komnenoi.



3 Trebizond, Hagia Sophia. General view from the south-east

Exterior

The exterior of the church confounds any expectations that Manuel

merely sought to produce a facsimile of Constantinople in exile. Its form is unlike anything produced in the great city in the twelfth century, or in Nicaea or Epiros in the thirteenth. The overall appearance of the church is determined by a combination of elements that are unique to this site. The church is raised more than a metre off the ground on a podium, which extends out beyond the church on three sides. Porches, each nearly the height of the main body of the church, project far out from the north, west, and south entrances to the naos (Figs 6 and 7). These substantially alter the external dimensions and shape of the church. The profile of the church is also affected by its low, conical dome, and the east end culminates in a pentagonal main apse, flanked by semi-circular side apses (Fig. 8). These features all disguise the interior of the church, which conforms to traditional Byzantine ecclesiastical design much more closely. The naos is a cross-in-square design, with the dome supported on four magnificent columns of Proconnesian marble. It is this composite of materials and design that led Cyril Mango to dismiss the architecture from a Byzantine perspective as ‘contaminated’.⁹



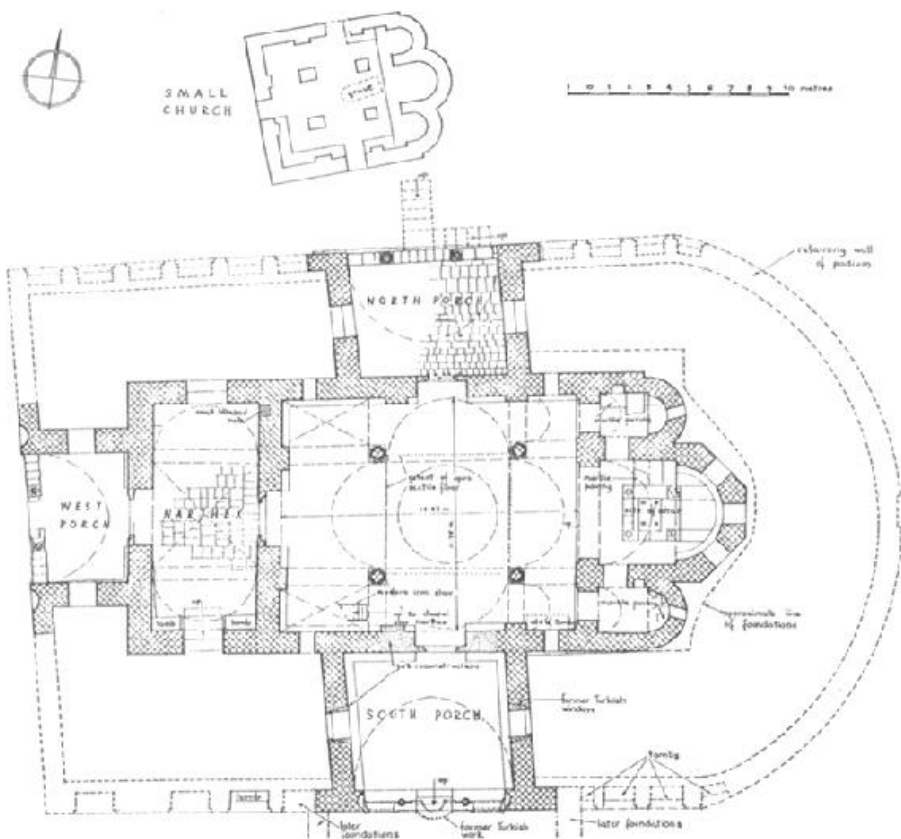
4 The Panagia Chrysokephalos from the southeast. The main pentagonal apse dominates the eastern façade, and the small south apse is a later addition

The materials from which Hagia Sophia is built and the construction methods used provide the first evidence for a distinctive regional influence on the architectural form. The church is constructed

from ashlar in alternating thick and thin courses over a rubble core.¹⁰ This sets it apart from the traditional use of brick that was favoured for Byzantine church building. It does, however, have a precedent in Trebizond in the masonry of the Panagia Chrysokephalos. The decision to use stone rather than brick may well have been determined by the easy availability of local stone, and also by regional skills in stone architecture. Both the Armenians and Georgians built their churches almost exclusively from stone, and the same is true of the mosques and medreses built by the Seljuqs on the Anatolian plateau to the south of Trebizond. However, Georgian and Armenian architecture, whilst very interested in the decorative properties of stone, especially in areas where coloured tufa was available, tends not to apply it in the simple horizontal linear patterns seen at Hagia Sophia. The more sombre external appearance of the stonework at Hagia Sophia might suggest that Anatolian or Caucasian craftsmen were being employed, but working to a more local, Pontic design. Evidence that regional craftsmen may have had an important role in designing the church in such a way as to best use and display their skills can be found in the two rows of black and white joggled masonry at the top of the north porch (Fig. 9). This is a technique almost exclusively associated with Islamic architecture, yet here it is used to adorn a church, and has a cross at its centre.¹¹ The construction techniques of the church are the first signs of an important regional influence on the design of the church of Hagia Sophia. This is an area that will be examined in greater detail in relation to the external sculpture of the church.



5 St Eugenios from the southeast. The string moulding around the main apse copies that at Hagia Sophia. The original porch by the south transept was removed, probably when the church was converted into a mosque



6 Ground plan of Hagia Sophia. The west face of the podium seems to have determined the equally skew positioning of the three porches. Note the discrepancy between the locations of the western columns beneath the dome and their corresponding pilasters on the north and south walls. The small church to the north is a later part of the monastic buildings



7 Reconstructed elevation of north façade of Hagia Sophia. This shows the importance of the podium in the elevation of the church, and the awkward arrangement of windows around the north porch (which is repeated on the south side)



8 Main apse and prothesis apse of Hagia Sophia. The archway in the east side of the south porch gave access to the raised area of the podium around the apses. The roof of the porch cuts into the windows of the south transept

Other aspects of the exterior are also very distinctive. The low conical dome appears to be a hybrid of a shallow Byzantine cupola and a much higher and steeper Caucasian dome. The dominant pentagonal central apse is a feature unique to Trebizond, and is seen on both the other principal monuments in the city, the Panagia Chrysokephalos and the church of St Eugenios (Figs 4 and 5). Significantly, this design is also markedly different from the architecture employed in Trebizond before 1204. Earlier churches, such as the church of St Anne, restored by Basil I in 885, have three curved apses (Fig. 10).¹² The three main thirteenth-century churches were all imperial commissions, so the adoption of this distinct architectural motif must be seen as a desire by the Grand Komnenoi to impose an architectural uniformity on their new capital. It suggests that the Grand Komnenoi's plans to remodel Trebizond covered the city as a whole. Given that the Panagia Chrysokephalos was the earliest, and most important, of these three churches to be built, it may also reflect a desire to replicate the cathedral's architectural 'iconography' in the later churches.



9 Joggled masonry on the north porch of Hagia Sophia. The boss below the cross may originally have held a low relief sculpture

The other distinctive features of the exterior move us beyond aesthetic and constructional concerns to elements which must have

had a considerable bearing upon the function of the church. Both features are unique to Hagia Sophia, and have no exact parallels anywhere. They indicate a level of architectural and possibly liturgical innovation unmatched either in the rival Byzantine empires or among the Christian neighbours of Trebizond.

The Podium

The podium on which the church stands extends under the church and its porches in the form of a large rectangular platform, with a curved east side (Figs 6 and 7). It originally stood 1.40 m high and its north and south retaining walls were enlivened by a series of arched niches. Talbot Rice's excavations proved the podium to be contemporaneous with the church, but as an architectural device it is unique in Byzantine and east Christian architecture.¹³

The visual effect of the podium is clear: it raised the church up and so gave it a more imposing silhouette. It also made the process of entering the church more of a spectacle, since all the three porches must have been preceded by flights of five or six steps.¹⁴ Over the centuries, the ground around the podium has slowly risen, which has diminished its impact; this erosion was completed in the 1960s when the ground was levelled to create an 'English' garden. The podium is now effectively lost and so the profile of the church within the compound has been lowered. As elegant and magnificent as it now appears, the church must originally have presented a considerably more imposing sight to its first worshippers.

The decision to include the podium in the design had important repercussions on the building. It entailed a great deal of extra expense for the patron (and work for the builders), and imposed limits on the appearance of the church. The dimensions and angle of the west wall of the podium determined the location and angle of the west face of the west porch. The west wall of the podium seems also to have been used to mark out other parts of the church, as the lateral walls of the north and south porches are at the same angle, all equally skew to the other north-south walls in the church. This quirk in the layout of the podium cannot be explained. The podium also dictated the relative depths of the three porches: that to the west being cut short by the west face of the podium.



10 St Anne, Trebizond. Rebuilt by Basil I in 884/5, this is the oldest surviving church in the city

The only clear function for the podium that can now be determined is as a housing for burials. Ten evenly spaced niches were uncovered on the north side of the church, and eight less evenly spread ones on the south side. All contained stone-built graves, and one, on the south side preserves fifteenth-century funerary paintings.¹⁵ Graffiti on the

exterior of the apse, the oldest dated to 1291 and 1293, provide earlier evidence for the use of the area around the church as a burial place for monks.¹⁶ These indicate that Hagia Sophia provided a unique solution to the problem of providing space for a series of individual tomb monuments without cluttering the interior of the church. One further medieval tomb was discovered inside the church, against the south wall of the church, just outside the diakonikon. As this corresponds with the most likely location for the donor portrait of Manuel I Grand Komnenos, which Finlay records as being ‘on the interior wall to the right of the door of the mosque entering from the vestibule’, it is probable that this was the emperor’s own tomb.¹⁷ This supports Talbot Rice’s proposal that Hagia Sophia was designed, at least in part, to be the funerary chapel of the Grand Komnenoi.¹⁸ The placing of tombs in two different locations – one inside the church, the others in the podium niches – indicates a revolution in imperial funerary practice. With only the emperor buried within the church, and all others (whether members of his family or court, or the monks of the monastery) buried around the exterior, it would suggest the beginnings of a cult of the individual emperor, in which the hierarchical relationships of life were reproduced after death.

The building of the podium also produced a series of open, raised areas around the church: one extended from the east sides of the north and south porches around the apse, and two smaller ones stood to north and south of the narthex, bounded by the west porch and the west sides of the north and south porches. It is impossible to know now whether these areas had any processional or liturgical function, although arches in the side walls of the porches and doors in the north and south walls of the narthex gave easy access to all three. Brounov suggested that they might originally have been galleried ambulatories,¹⁹ which would look back to the encircling ambulatories around the naves of the Georgian great churches of the tenth century, such as Oshki, Khakhuli, Alaverdi and Kutaisi.²⁰ Talbot Rice’s excavations found no evidence for any linking galleries at Hagia Sophia, but the many points of entry to these platforms means that such a function cannot be excluded.

The Porches

If the dominance of the podium is now lost, that of the porches remains as striking as ever. Three enormous barrel-vaulted porches precede the entrances to the north, south and west entrances into the church (Figs 11, 12 and 13). These substantially alter the external appearance of the church. Instead of the compact rectangular appearance of most Byzantine churches, Hagia Sophia appears, when

seen from above, more like a Latin-cross church with protruding transepts (Fig. 14). Talbot Rice's brief excavations at the junction of the south porch and the western part of the south wall of the church found that the foundations of the porches were bound in with those of the church and of the podium.²¹ This suggests that the overall appearance of the church was determined from the outset: as a triple-porched structure standing on the podium. There is now only one piece of visible evidence to confirm this: one stone in the lowest visible row at the junction of the north apse and north porch has been cut so as to turn the corner at this junction. Despite this, the incorporation of the porches into the overall design is awkward, and the porches cover some of the fine stonework around the heads of the windows on the north and south façades, which suggests that the church underwent a certain amount of alteration in the course of building.

The south porch, the largest of the three, is larger in area than the narthex, and the north is only a little smaller (the west porch is substantially smaller, truncated by the edge of the podium). Given their size and prominence, it must be assumed that these large structures, for which the term porch is somewhat insufficient, had an important function, although determining what that was is by no means easy.

Porches are not a usual feature of Byzantine architecture, and the main parallels for them that are normally cited are to be found in the east, especially in Georgia.²² By this period in Georgia, porches had become an increasingly important feature of churches, and were often added to older buildings that lacked them, as at Manglisi, where a porch was added to the fifth-century church between 1020 and 1027 (Fig. 15). They were used as a way of articulating the main, predominantly south, entrance to the church. Many of these porches have a small extension to the east that contains an apse, as a form of additional chapel, and their vaults or tympana are often decorated with images of the Ascension (Glorification) of the Cross, reflecting the principal Georgian cult.²³ The consistency of location of the porches and of their decoration suggests a consistency in function. They may have acted as a space in which to prepare worshippers to enter the church, but the frequent presence of an apse suggests that they played an active role in the Georgian liturgy, either as the gathering point before a processional entrance into the church, or as a location for separate services. It is possible that Georgian porches housed the functions normally held in the narthex of Byzantine churches. They were certainly important elements in Georgian church design.

In Georgia, these porches normally precede the south entrance to

the church, which seems almost universally to have been the principal entrance. At Hagia Sophia, it is clear that the south porch was always the most important (based both on its size and on the quality and iconography of its sculptural decoration). It is therefore possible that the concentration on the south porch was an adoption of Georgian liturgical and processional practice, which would reflect the strong Georgian influence on the empire at its birth. A similar practice can be seen at both St Eugenios and at the Panagia Chrysoskephalos, where lateral porches seem to have priority over western doors.²⁴



11 South porch of Hagia Sophia. The marble columns supporting the tympanum were probably made in the fifth century and are re-used. The quatrefoil opening has been seen as a western influence on the church, but probably derives from an Armenian source



12 North porch of Hagia Sophia. The columns here are probably sixth century

This interpretation, however, is undermined by the presence of the two other porches at Hagia Sophia. For these it is much harder to find precedents or means for interpretation. The only closely comparable examples are two churches, usually dated to the ninth to eleventh centuries, which are found further around the Black Sea coastline in Abkhazeti: Bzyb' and Likhni.²⁵ The church at Likhni was part of a palace complex,²⁶ and these possible royal connections make it a very tempting parallel for Hagia Sophia, but there is no evidence to suggest anything other than a typological link. At Georgian sites where we can be more confident of active royal involvement, including the Metekhi church in Tbilisi, which was restored by king Demetre II (1278–89) and Pitareti, built under Giorgi IV Lasha (1210–23), the architecture conforms to the standard Georgian pattern of a single lateral porch.²⁷ Beyond this, Georgia can provide only the most general of comparisons. The tenth-century churches with surrounding ambulatories (which encompass north, west and south walls of the nave) also suggest comparisons, but again these seem to have acted more as side chapels than as porches. The porches at Trebizond show no evidence of having such individual functions. They are not designed to function as chapels, being too open, and although they do have small niches, these are located at the entrances to the porches, and so could not function as apses.²⁸

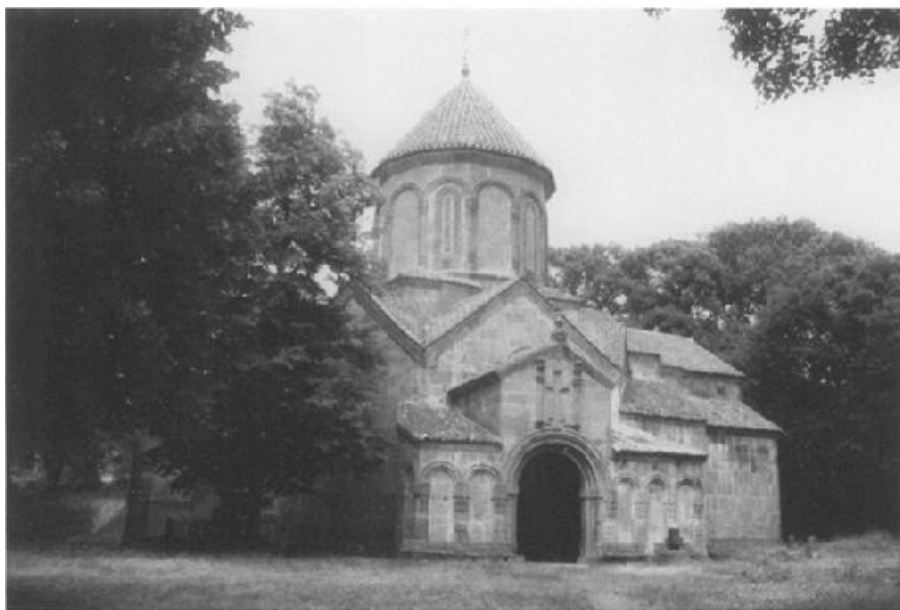


13 West porch of Hagia Sophia. This is the narrowest of the porches, because of the west face of the podium. The columns are probably fifth or sixth century

It seems best to regard the porches as an elaboration of the Georgian system, with a principal south entrance, but here with north and west entrances enhanced too. They may well have served a processional function – if only as a place for people to gather out of the rain, an all-too-common occurrence in the shadow of the Pontic Alps.²⁹ More evidence about how the porches functioned in terms of the working of the church can be gained by examining their reliefs and wall paintings, and these are investigated in later chapters.



14 The roofs of Hagia Sophia seen from the fifteenth-century bell tower



15 The church of the Virgin at Manglisi in Kartli, eastern Georgia. The main body of the church, a quadriconch interior inside an octagonal exterior, was built in the fifth century. It was extended by king Bagrat II between 1020 and 1027, when the apses, south porch and a smaller western porch were added

The exterior of Hagia Sophia, then, is very problematic. Some, but by no means all, of its design and construction can be linked to local architectural practices; but the overall appearance of the church is unique. Many of the novel features must have been determined by ritual requirements at the church, whether those of the patron or the monks, but we can only speculate what these were. Ritual is examined further in the next chapter.

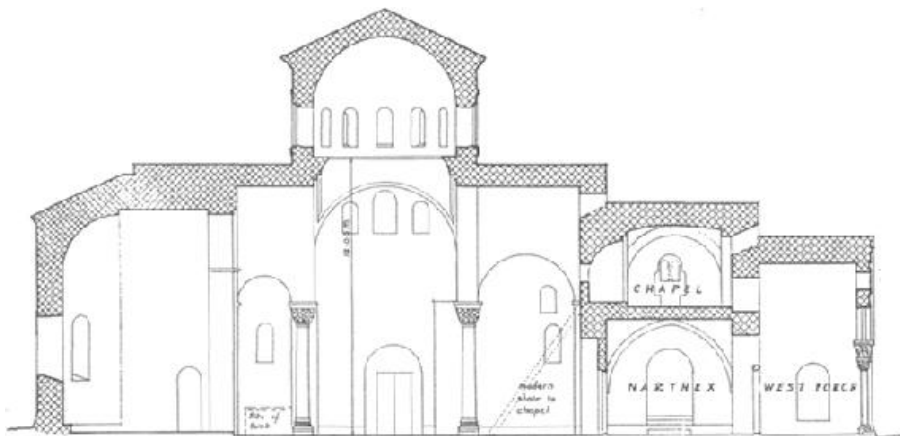
Interior

The exterior of Hagia Sophia, to a great extent, disguises the interior. For the main body of the church presents, to Byzantine eyes, a much more familiar space ([Plates III and IV](#); [Figs 16 and 17](#)). Once beyond the porches, the interior spaces that the church of Hagia Sophia presents are predictable in arrangement, if unusually spacious and light. The church is a standard cross-in-square design with a single dome. To the east is a main apse, flanked by prothesis and diakonikon (with which it has communicating doors). The foundations of the main altar can be seen in the floor of the apse and indentations in the

side walls indicate the location of the chancel screen. The aisles are lower than the central spaces of the naos, and the ceilings are barrel-vaulted, except in the aisles to the west of the dome, where there are groin vaults. To the west of the naos is a narthex, divided into three compartments, the central of which is groin-vaulted, with barrel vaults to north and south. The dome rests on four Proconnesian marble columns with matching capitals and bases. The columns are the largest monoliths in the city and their marble is of very high quality. They must have been imported to Trebizond and their inclusion in the church is eloquent testimony to the expense of Manuel's church and his concern for its appearance.



16 The main apse and dome of Hagia Sophia. The interior is very tall and light



17 Section through Hagia Sophia looking south. The fenestration problems caused by the room over the narthex and the west porch are evident

The church is lit by a series of windows in the dome and on all four facades. All the windows form part of the original design, although many are partially blocked by the high roofs of the narthex and porches. Nevertheless, their effect is still to flood the church with light. At some point in the past, probably in the 1880s, the church was restored as a mosque and much of the south wall was destroyed in order to re-orientate the building towards a mihrab that was placed between the columns of the south porch. This resulted in the loss of paintings on the south side of the church, and destroyed any evidence about what must have been the main entrance to the naos.³⁰ However, apart from this, the interior has survived in remarkably good condition.

One unusual architectural feature is the existence of a room over the narthex. The sole entrance to this chamber is through a small door high in the south aisle of the naos (where there is now a steep metal staircase). This room has a small apse in the centre of its east wall and so may have had a liturgical function. However, the difficulty in gaining access to the room means that it is unlikely to have been the site of important liturgical celebrations, and the absence of windows looking down into the naos means that it cannot have been designed as a gallery, either for women or the emperor.³¹ The difficult access to this room suggests that it may have acted as a secure treasury room.

The conformity of the interior of the church suggests that its liturgical arrangements followed standard Orthodox practice. More about the liturgy can be learned by the study of the wall paintings in the church, which is undertaken in [chapters 6 and 7](#).

Building Hagia Sophia: alterations and ideology

Selina Ballance, in her comprehensive analysis of the architecture of Hagia Sophia, noted that there was evidence that the design of the building had undergone a number of changes during its erection.³² These changes provide important evidence about the evolution of the design of the church, and they are crucial in any search for a possible interpretation of it. The most significant discrepancy in the design is the lack of correspondence between columns and pilasters in the naos (see ground plan, [Fig. 6](#)). The two columns which support the west side of the dome are not in line with the pilasters on the north and south walls which should accompany them: they are placed closer to the west wall. The result is that the dome is extended on its east-west axis, which must have caused structural problems during the building, and certainly forced the builders to include extra stepped arches beneath the east and west vaults of the naos under the dome. It also resulted in awkward angles at the key arches which define the vaults in the four corner compartments of the naos.



18 East wall of west porch of Hagia Sophia. The central window lights the room over the narthex. It was blocked as soon as the church was completed to make way for the painting of the Last Judgement in the west porch, but subsequently re-opened. The mandorla around Christ is still visible around the window, with Adam and Eve below

The evidence of change is also visible in considerable disruption to

many of the windows of the church. The window high up in the west wall of the naos is partially blocked by the upper part of the roof of the chamber over the narthex; the carefully tailored stonework around the windows into the northern and southern compartments of the west part of the nave is partially hidden by the walls of the porches; and the window in the west wall of the gallery over the narthex was filled in in order to be able to paint the Last Judgement in the west porch (it has since been re-opened; [Fig. 18](#)). In all these cases, the location of the window was badly planned necessitating its partial or complete loss. However, from the outside, the double height of the narthex is an integral part of the design of the church: there is certainly no sign that the narthex was at some time raised in height, and there are no masonry breaks between the narthex and the naos. Equally, Talbot Rice's excavations proved that the porches were contemporaneous with the building of the church, which means that the locations of the windows could have been moved before construction.

Finally, the two surviving doors into the naos from the north and west porches were substantially reduced in size at some point when marble door frames were inserted and the surrounding gaps filled in with brick and rubble. These areas were subsequently plastered over and painted.

These points raise the question of when and why these alterations were made, as all diminish the coherence and quality of the building. We know from Talbot Rice's excavations that the overall plan of the building was clearly laid out in advance, and the evidence of painting around the door frames and narthex window indicate that all the changes were made before the church was painted. This suggests that the alterations were made during the building process. All the evidence supports the idea that the church is homogeneous, and that it was designed around its ground plan. The ground plan determined the layout and size of the naos, narthex and porches, and the orientation of their walls, but it could not determine any of the vertical elements. These were only established as the church was built. Presumably approximate heights for the narthex and naos were envisaged, but they could only ultimately be determined by the heights of the columns that were used in the naos. Thus it was only if a change were made to these columns that all the alterations would have to be made.

At some point during the building process, then, it seems that Manuel I Grand Komnenos came into possession of a set of columns which he decided to include in his new foundation on the edge of the city. These required significant alterations to the fabric of the building. The height of these columns immediately determined the height of the naos, and therefore also the location and positioning of

windows. However, the builders could not easily alter the height of the narthex that adjoined the naos, since this was required to have a gallery. As a result, there was an awkward join between the two parts of the building, which affected the window on the west wall of the naos. It would seem that the naos was originally to have been higher than it now appears (which would have raised the west window clear of the narthex roof), but that this had to be revised when the dimensions of the columns became apparent. The change in height of the building necessitated a larger dome, and this required the two western columns to be moved even further west (even though the positions of their corresponding pilasters on the north and south walls were already determined), and this subsequently affected the western part of the naos. This suggests that the columns used in the church can only have arrived after the building had begun, but that they were important enough to warrant major changes to the structure of the church with the problematic appearance that resulted. A similar explanation would fit the two surviving doorways into the naos, which were reduced to accommodate new marble doorframes.



19 Capital of south west column in naos of Hagia Sophia



20 Early Christian capital, probably sixth century, discovered at Topkapi Sarayı, Istanbul

Why should columns be so important as to force so many detrimental changes? The columns in Hagia Sophia are very distinct: they are four matching monoliths of Proconnesian marble, with fitted bases and basket-style capitals decorated with three rows of lightly carved grapes, interspersed with palmettes (Fig. 19). No other columns in the city of Trebizond can match them for quality or size.³³ They must have been imported from elsewhere: there is nothing similar in eastern Anatolia and relatively few other pieces of *spolia* have been found in Trebizond from this period.³⁴

To search for an origin for these columns, it is necessary to look further afield: to Constantinople. An almost identical capital was recorded in 1914 at the Topkapi Sarayı (Fig. 20).³⁵ Stylistically, the capitals are similar to the capitals uncovered during the excavations of St Polyeuktos,³⁶ which also points to a Constantinopolitan origin, and confirms a date for the carving of the columns in the sixth century.³⁷ We seem, then, to have *spolia* from the imperial capital.

Viewed as *spolia*, and as *spolia* from Constantinople in particular, the columns in Hagia Sophia gain considerable significance. The ideology of *spolia* has been explored for earlier periods, and it was an important means of expressing political legitimation.³⁸ The tympanum over the door to the church of St Anne in Trebizond, a classical sarcophagus reused by Basil I in 885, demonstrates how the past had already been recycled in the city to imperial benefit (Fig. 21).³⁹

Alexios I Grand Komnenos was able to reuse an inscription naming the emperor Hadrian as part of his rebuilding of the Chrysokephalos.⁴⁰ There is no record of any earlier building in Trebizond from which these columns could have been taken, and so it must be presumed that they came from Constantinople. To take *spolia* from the capital during the period of the Latin empire provided a further link between the Grand Komnenoi and the imperial city. If the building of Hagia Sophia were part of an attempt to rebuild the city of Constantinople here at the east end of the Black Sea, then this was its most literal manifestation.

For comparative evidence from this period, we need only to look to Venice and the so-called *pilastri acritani*.⁴¹ These two ornately carved columns from the sixth-century church of St Polyeuktos in Constantinople were taken to Venice as part of the spoils of the Fourth Crusade. There they were set up at the end of the Piazzetta, the ceremonial entrance to the city between the entrances to the doge's palace and the church of San Marco. They joined other spoils, such as the statues of the Tetrarchs, which were also looted from Constantinople. The columns served as important markers of the new status of the trading city in the thirteenth century. Although in Venice and Trebizond the columns were imported to serve different functions, they had the same underlying meaning. Both demonstrated the political inheritance of each city state and its ability to undertake such difficult and costly feats of engineering and transportation.



21 Reused sarcophagus over south entrance of St Anne, Trebizond. It

shows a standing warrior to the left of a large winged *nike*. The inscription between them dates the renovation of the church to 884/5. The Armenian crosses above the relief were inserted after 1893

The acquisition of the columns in Trebizond also gives some impression of the level of trade in the Black Sea in the mid-thirteenth century. It suggests that there was a great deal of commerce moving in and out of the city, even before the establishment by the Genoese and Venetians of permanent settlements in the 1280s.⁴² Trebizond was clearly still in touch with the capital throughout this period (if only through trading intermediaries), and there is evidence for the circulation of Trapezuntine coins in Constantinople in the late thirteenth century.⁴³ The acquisition of the columns must have been a considerable coup for Manuel I, which no later emperors in the city were able to repeat. The praise which Byzantine writers lavished on marble provides eloquent testimony to its desirability and symbolic importance, but the Venetian parallel exemplifies its possible political and symbolic importance. They were clearly worth altering the building to incorporate.

The formal examination of Hagia Sophia demonstrates how much can be learned from a close study of the architectural evolution of the church. It shows that the design and possibly also the function of Hagia Sophia looked both to Constantinople and to local regional traditions of building. However, while we may see this as a hybrid architecture, borrowing eclectically from Byzantine, Georgian and even Seljuq building traditions, it is clear that it was regarded as a homogeneous whole by Manuel I and his court, who saw no conflict in the various elements that they brought together. However, a formal analysis can provide only one aspect of an interpretation of the church. More important to its understanding is to see how the church functioned as part of the city of Trebizond and as part of the overall imperial project of the Grand Komnenoi. This is undertaken in the next chapter, in which the ceremonial and processional role of the church and its relation with other new buildings in the city is discussed.

Chapter 3

Trebizond as imperial capital: ceremonial and processions

The architectural form of Hagia Sophia tells us much about how it functioned. Its internal layout was designed to accommodate the normal liturgy of the Orthodox Church, and suggests that the usual division between the laity and the clergy was maintained, the two being divided by the chancel screen. The podium and niches outside the church indicate a funerary function to the building, and the large porches only seem to fit some form of processional function, as a place for people to gather. These ideas can be explored in greater depth by placing the church in the broader context of the city of Trebizond in the thirteenth century. This chapter considers the relationship between the church and the other new imperial buildings in the city, the cathedral of the Panagia Chrysokephalos, the cult church of St Eugenios, and the palace of the Trapezuntine emperors, as well as the commercial heart of the city around the harbour and the *Meydan* (central square/forum). Analysis of the main imperial buildings leads on to a discussion of the ritual geography of the city and how the church was used to enhance imperial ceremonial, and thereby articulate the Grand Komnenoi's concept of their power and status. Even though the Grand Komnenoi may have regarded their stay in Trebizond as temporary they needed the concrete embodiments of imperial rule from the first days of their rule. They could look to their name and their ancestry to support their claim to the throne, but this had to be maintained throughout their exile in Trebizond. The claim

was demonstrated through the exercise of power and the promotion of an imperial identity. This identity rested largely on an expression of the emperor's relationship to Christ – the source of imperial power and authority.

Ceremonial was a vital part of the display of power in the Byzantine world. It was employed by all the powers in the region as a way of manifesting authority. It allowed rulers to display themselves to their public in a carefully controlled way. The robes they wore, the people, icons and relics that accompanied them and the buildings that they visited could all be exploited in order to convey particular impressions of power.¹ They served both to relate the ruler to his people by appearing among them, but at the same time to emphasize his difference from them, through his bearing and traditional pose of aloofness. Authority was necessarily framed by material trappings.

In the fourth century, the layout of Constantinople had been determined by Constantine the Great to provide the necessary settings for the display of power. The imperial palace, hippodrome, mausoleum, churches, fora and processional routes were all structured into the first design of the city and were elaborated by Constantine's successors over the following nine hundred years.² The Laskarid emperors in Nicaea inherited a well-planned late antique city with major churches, fora, thoroughfares and an imperial residence.³ The Grand Komnenoi had to achieve the same rather more quickly. They had to transform Trebizond into an imperial city in a matter of decades, particularly after the loss of Sinope in 1214 ended any immediate hopes of regaining Constantinople. The restructuring of Trebizond to suit its new function seems to have begun very early on. Some elements, of course, were already in place, and the history and geography of the city predetermined the locations of others. The city contained the results of previous imperial commissions when the city had acted as a temporary imperial residence, such as the aqueduct of Justinian, the restoration of the church of St Anne in 885 under Basil I, or Basil II's improvements in the church of St Eugenios in 1021/2. These provided a Byzantine imperial heritage to which Alexios and his successors could turn in order to demonstrate their legitimacy and the continuity of Byzantine rule in the city.

The *Meydan* was the principal open space in the city.⁴ It lay in the heart of the commercial eastern suburb of the city, close to the port, and it was connected by the city's major thoroughfare to the fortified citadel, located between the two ravines of Trebizond (Fig. 2). This well defended location had always been the governmental core of the city, and it was substantially remodelled by the Grand Komnenoi to act as their imperial palace (Fig. 22). Panaretos refers to the palace as the 'palace of the emperor lord Andronikos the Grand Komnenos', a

reference to Andronikos I Gidon (1222–35).⁵ Bryer and Winfield have identified substantial re-workings that can be linked to this period, which suggest the scale of the work undertaken by the first emperors, at just the time that the emperors of Nicaea were building themselves a suitable imperial residence at Nymphaion.⁶ It was this work that provided the core of the palace that Bessarion was to describe some 200 years later. He gives a picture of a series of magnificent spaces that were to frame the business of government and to impress visitors with the majesty and lineage of the Grand Komnenoi.⁷ While much of what he describes must be later fourteenth- or fifteenth-century work, the functions and purpose of the buildings remained the same as in the thirteenth century.

If the palace was to protect the Grand Komnenoi and project their wealth and imperial majesty, then the rebuilding of the Panagia Chrysokephalos, the city's cathedral, demonstrated their relationship to Christ, the true source of all power (Fig. 4). The Panagia Chrysokephalos was located immediately to the north of the citadel in the Middle City, between the ravines. Nineteenth-century travellers found inscriptions that indicate the presence of a church there in the tenth century, but that building was replaced in the early thirteenth-century. A (now lost) inscription in the floor of the church contained the name Alexios Komnenos,⁸ which can only refer to the first emperor of Trebizond. This gives some indication of the early date at which the remodelling of the city began. The cathedral has undergone many subsequent alterations, notably in the fourteenth century and much of the archaeology to explain its history still lies under its current Turkish whitewash; but the essential components of Alexios's church remain apparent. He rebuilt the church in ashlar as a basilica with a single pentagonal apse at the east end. Its interior was covered in lavish marble panels including porphyry and verde antico, a few fragments of which survive (Fig. 23). It was adorned with mosaic both inside and out, and had an intricate opus sectile floor, now covered.⁹

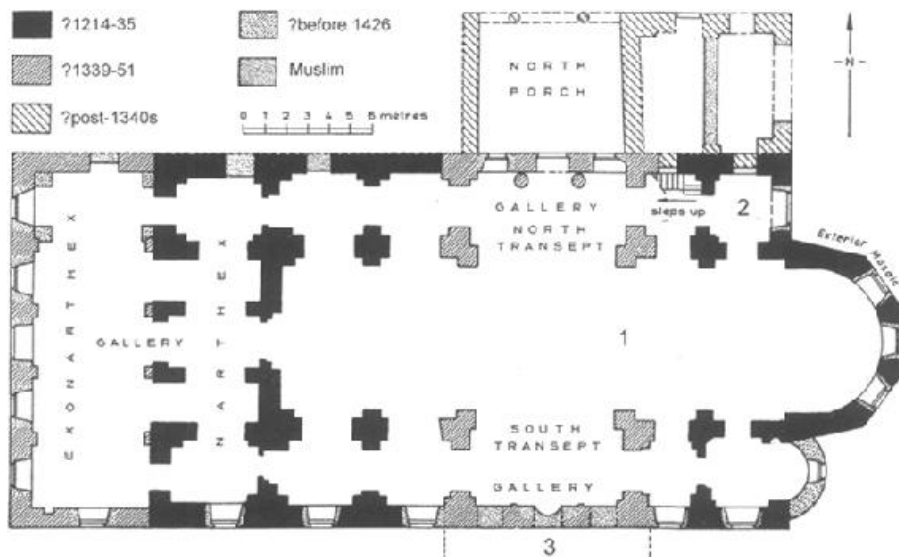


22 View across west ravine of Trebizond. The walls in the mid distance are those of the middle city, and those higher up in the distance are of the citadel and imperial palace

What is interesting about the Chrysokephalos is the way in which it was designed specifically to suit the liturgical and ritual needs of the Grand Komnenoi whilst in exile from Constantinople. Alexios rebuilt the Chrysokephalos to an unusual, apparently out-dated design, incorporating peculiar, seemingly archaic features (Fig. 24). The church was originally built as a basilica, with just a single, central apse. In the north-east corner, in place of the prothesis was a square chamber, which had access to both the apse and, by stairs, to a gallery at the west which looked across the naos to the apse (Fig. 25). The cathedral also had an ambo. Anthony Bryer has convincingly argued that these were all the necessary elements required for the liturgy of the coronation: a *metatorion* chamber by the apse for the robing of the emperor, *katechoumena* (galleries) for the display of the newly crowned emperor, and an ambo in the centre of the naos for the act of coronation itself.¹⁰ Alexios's building had an overt imperial aim, and many of its architectural motifs were taken up at Hagia Sophia, notably the use of ashlar and the presence of the polygonal central apse.



23 South side of the apse of the Panagia Chrysoskephalos, Trebizond. These are the only visible remains of the thirteenth-century marble decoration of the church. The mosaics in the apse and the marble floor are now either lost or hidden



24 Ground plan of the Panagia Chrysoskephalos. 1: probable location of ambo; 2: metatorion; 3: location of south porch

The cathedral was rebuilt to act as the heart of imperial ritual in

the city. It must also have acted as the centre of the empire's ecclesiastical hierarchy and this too affected the grand scale on which the Panagia Chrysokephalos was built. The cathedral had to provide a suitably grand setting for the metropolitan of the city who was to crown the emperor, to appoint bishops for the whole region, and to act as the bastion of Orthodoxy in the empire. Into the eleventh century, the metropolitan of Trebizond had been able to exert his ecclesiastical authority over regions outside Byzantine control,¹¹ and no doubt the Grand Komnenoi intended to reassert that precedence again.¹² This combination of coronation church of the emperor and the home of the senior ecclesiastical official in the empire gave the Chrysokephalos a significant ideological status which may have encouraged the replication of so many aspects of its design in later churches. However, some elements, such as the single apse, were not suited to liturgical needs elsewhere and so could not be adopted.

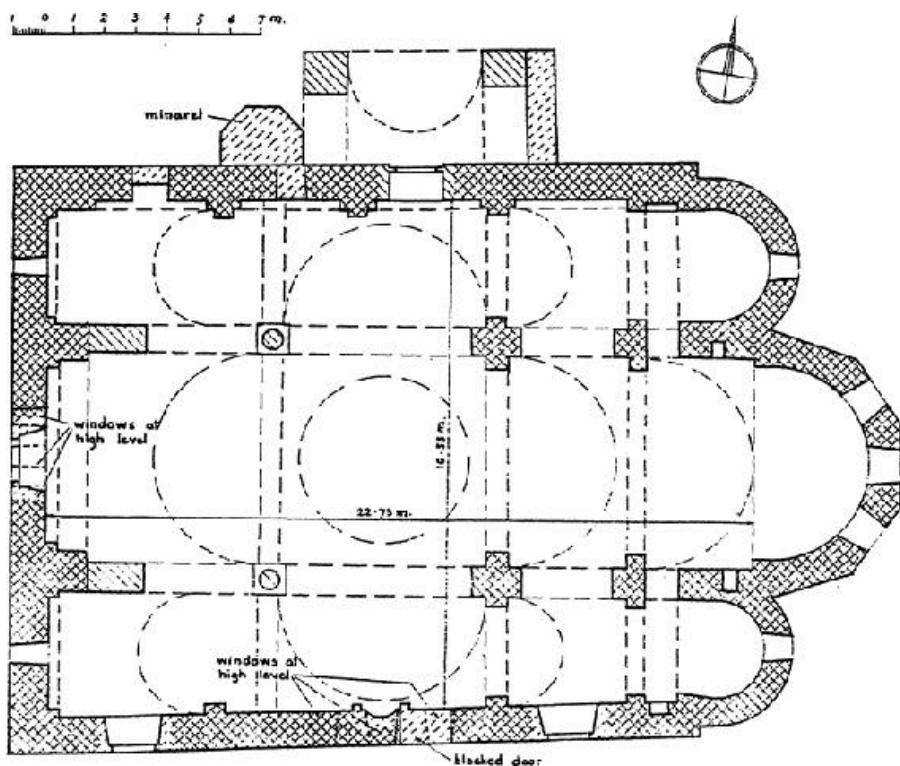


25 North transept of the Panagia Chrysokephalos, Trebizond. The gallery which led from the metatorion to the west balcony is held up on reused ionic columns. The corbel visible at the east end suggests that the gallery was originally wider

The choice of a basilical design for a cathedral in the thirteenth century is striking. It was not an architectural form that had been in vogue anywhere in Byzantium or the Christian east for some centuries, and certainly owed nothing to the coronation church of Constantinople, Hagia Sophia. It may have been a deliberate archaism,

but it is difficult to understand what reference may have been intended. A basilical form would not suit normal liturgical needs, and the main period for the building of basilicas was too remote in both geography and time to have any obvious resonance in Trebizond. However, it is interesting to note that in the valleys of the river Çoruh to the south-east of Trebizond one major basilical church had been built at Otkhta Eklesia (Dört Kilise) in the late tenth century by Davit *kouropalates*, the Georgian ruler of Tao-Klarjeti, who had very close links to Byzantium. His choice of a basilica had very sophisticated theological grounds, but it should be noted that the church had a gallery at the west end, which may also have been designed for royal acclamations.¹³

The other major ecclesiastical building in the city was the church of St Eugenios across the eastern ravine from the citadel (Figs 5 and 26). Its dedication celebrated the principal saint of the city. The church has a (now hidden) *opus sectile* floor bearing a date of 1291, and it is generally thought that the church was rebuilt at this time. Lazaropoulos records that when *Melik* used the church as the base for his attack on the city in 1222/3, he ordered his men to ‘pull down and destroy the upper parts [of the church] and ... break up and remove the floor’. However, it seems that they did not demolish it as *Melik* planned, although its interior was certainly desecrated by ‘lascivious women ... exciting themselves to frenzy’, as Andronikos Gidon was able to offer embellishments to the church after his victory over *Melik*.¹⁴ Panaretos records that the church was destroyed in the civil war of 1340 and had to be rebuilt, but the survival of the 1291 floor inscription suggests that it can only have been a partial rebuilding.¹⁵ Selina Ballance and Baklanov both noted that the church had undergone extensive alterations at one point, when a dome was added; but the two doric columns (now both half enclosed in masonry) which support the western side of the dome are probably those referred to by Lazaropoulos as having been installed by Basil II in 1021/2 (Fig. 27).¹⁶ The complex archaeology of the church is now impossible to unravel while the church remains a functioning mosque. What is important is that, in the aftermath of *Melik*’s attack, the church was patronised by Andronikos Gidon, when it was embellished if not restored, and that it continued to be worked on through the rest of the century and beyond. It is also significant that the architectural history of the church: a basilical church built in ashlar and with a pentagonal apse and porches, which was subsequently altered to give it a dome, follows the same trajectory as the Panagia Chrysokephalos.



26 Ground plan of St Eugenios



27 Interior of St Eugenios, Trebizond. The north west column, partially enclosed in masonry, may be that of Basil II, installed in the church in 1021/2

Hagia Sophia emerges as the second, and perhaps most influential

of the great ecclesiastical building projects in Trebizond after the rebuilding of the Panagia Chrysokephalos. The crucial point about Manuel's new church is its unusual location, set well beyond the protective walls of the city. Such a choice must have added considerably to the costs of the foundation as it required such extensive fortifications around its land side. It would seem that this location was chosen in response to the inadequacy of Trebizond as a site for imperial ceremonial: it transformed the ritual geography of the city.

The presence of the podium around Hagia Sophia indicates the importance of the monastery as a funerary site. It allowed Manuel I Grand Komnenos to divide the functions of coronation and burial church, which had previously both been taken on by the Panagia Chrysokephalos, where certainly Andronikos Gidon had been buried.¹⁷ Now each function was given a separate home. A similar distinction, of course, always existed in Constantinople between Hagia Sophia and the Holy Apostles, but it was accentuated in the eleventh and twelfth centuries by the erection of new funerary monasteries in the city. The Pantokrator monastery, built by John II Komnenos as dynastic mausoleum, was the ultimate of these foundations, and it almost certainly acted as a dynastic model for Hagia Sophia.¹⁸ Architecturally, of course, the two foundations have little in common, but the Pantokrator was at the very heart of many imperial processions and used icons and relics as a way of venerating the imperial family. All are carefully delineated by the *typikon* of the monastery.¹⁹ These find parallels with the actions of the Grand Komnenoi. The correspondence is clearest in terms of the overall purpose of the buildings. The Pantokrator housed the tombs of four members of the Komnenian dynasty, and provided a distinct focus for an imperial family cult that was separate from that of earlier dynasties. It was also separate from other churches with imperial functions, such as the coronation church of Hagia Sophia or the cult churches within the Great Palace. The *typikon* of the Pantokrator makes it clear that the souls of those buried there were the principal concern of the monks. Hagia Sophia at Trebizond seems to have been the same. It separated the coronation and funerary churches of the city, and provided extensive space for future imperial and other burials.²⁰ The podium at Hagia Sophia was clearly designed to accommodate tombs, and, as we have seen, it is probable that Manuel I Grand Komnenos' tomb was within the church. In building Hagia Sophia, Manuel seems to have echoed Constantinopolitan imperial traditions. A parallel development can be seen in the empire of Nicaea where John III Vatatzes founded the monastery of Christ Saviour (Sosandra) on Mt Sipylos near Magnesia in 1224, where he and later

Theodore II Laskaris were buried.²¹ Equally, the dynasties in Serbia and Georgia, and possibly those in Bulgaria and Cilicia as well, built or renovated their dynastic mausolea at this time.²²

The first churches to be erected by the Grand Komnenoi equipped Trebizond for its new status: they housed the coronations and funerals of its emperors, and honoured the major local saint. They were spaced across the city in such a way as to redefine its ritual geography, by establishing new processional routes across the city. The first major secular building after 1204 was the imperial palace, the home of the emperors and their imperial government. This pattern reflects the priorities adopted by Constantine the Great on the foundation of Constantinople in 324. On both occasions, the key monuments for imperial ceremonial and ritual were built first. However, the key difference was that the Grand Komnenoi's buildings were clothed in the local idiom, so rooting their new Constantinople firmly in Trapezuntine soil.

As well as having individual functions it seems that all these buildings were part of a more general rebuilding and restructuring of the city as an imperial capital. The absence of documentary evidence from the thirteenth century means that it is now virtually impossible to reconstruct the imperial ceremonial of Trebizond in the early years of the empire with any accuracy. However, the known conservatism of later Trapezuntine society suggests that the later testimony of fourteenth-century chancery documents and of the writings of Lazaropoulos and Bessarion is probably a reliable witness to thirteenth-century practice.²³ The locations of the buildings can also provide clues as to the development of ceremonial in the early years of the empire. Both the Panagia Chrysokephalos and St Eugenios were in the centre of the city: the former between the ravines and next to the entrance to the imperial palace in the citadel, the latter on the hill above the commercial centre of the city, the *Meydan* and harbour. Hagia Sophia, in contrast, was located some distance from the city, out beyond the *tzykanisterion*, the imperial polo field (now the home of Trabzonspor FC), which must be seen as having an analogy in the Hippodrome of Constantinople as a public and imperial space, and a destination during processions.²⁴ This extramural location, which required the church to have particularly strong fortifications, must have been designed to serve the elaboration of imperial ceremonial particularly imperial processions.

We also have parallel evidence about the level and types of ceremonial undertaken in the other Orthodox states. We know that they took place in Nicaea and Epiros during the period of the Latin occupation, as well as in Latin Constantinople, Serbia and Bulgaria. There is also strong evidence from Georgia in the middle of the

thirteenth century of an elaborate ceremonial attached to the coronation of the king, and a detailed description of the ceremony survives.²⁵ This is particularly useful evidence as the Georgian monarchy and court were peripatetic, which would allow less space for an established range of ritual and ceremonial.

Processions were of great importance in the early history of the empire of Trebizond. Lazaropoulos's description of the siege of the city by *Melik* in 1222/3 (chapter 23 in the *Synopsis*) recounts a number of processions during and after the battle. Of these, the most important was that led by emperor Andronikos Gidon himself, who processed round the walls of the city with an icon of the Theotokos Hodegetria, which was kept in the Panagia Chrysokephalos, and the head of St Eugenios. It was the presence of this icon, the holiest in the city, and the intervention of St Eugenios that ultimately led to the Greek victory. In celebration of *Melik*'s defeat, there were processions to the church of St Eugenios to the east of the citadel to give thanks to the city's patron saint, and another in which *Melik* was led in honour through the commercial city along the sea front to the citadel.²⁶ Lazaropoulos calls street along which they travelled

τὴν αὐθεντικὴν τῶν Ῥωμαίων λεωφόρον ὁδόν,²⁷
and a description of 1369 of the Venetian concession in the city calls it the 'viem imperial',²⁸ which again supports the idea of an established system of imperial routes.

Lazaropoulos's record demonstrates the interest in ritual and processions in thirteenth-century Trebizond, which focused on important buildings in the city, the imperial palace or particular churches. This was part of a conscious attempt by the Grand Komnenoi to recreate the imperial ceremonial of their Komnenian ancestors in twelfth-century Constantinople. A continual refrain running through descriptions of the heart of Trebizond is its size, or rather lack of it. Lazaropoulos describes the area between the ravines, the imperial core of the city, as 'impregnable ... but not wide',²⁹ and in the fifteenth century Bessarion, in his encomium on the city, also noted its cramped nature, even while elsewhere praising the size of individual rooms in the palace.³⁰ The city of Trebizond was simply too small to be able to conduct the kinds of elaborate and lengthy processions which were so important to the expression of power and civic identity in the Byzantine empire. At its widest, the area between the ravines is only 200 m, and the distance from the *meydan* to the Panagia Chrysokephalos is only 750 m.

The construction of Hagia Sophia two kilometres to the west of the city allowed for longer, more elaborate processions, past the major imperial sites of the city, the *tzykanisterion* and the palace, and then on to the *commençai* core of the city in its eastern suburb along the

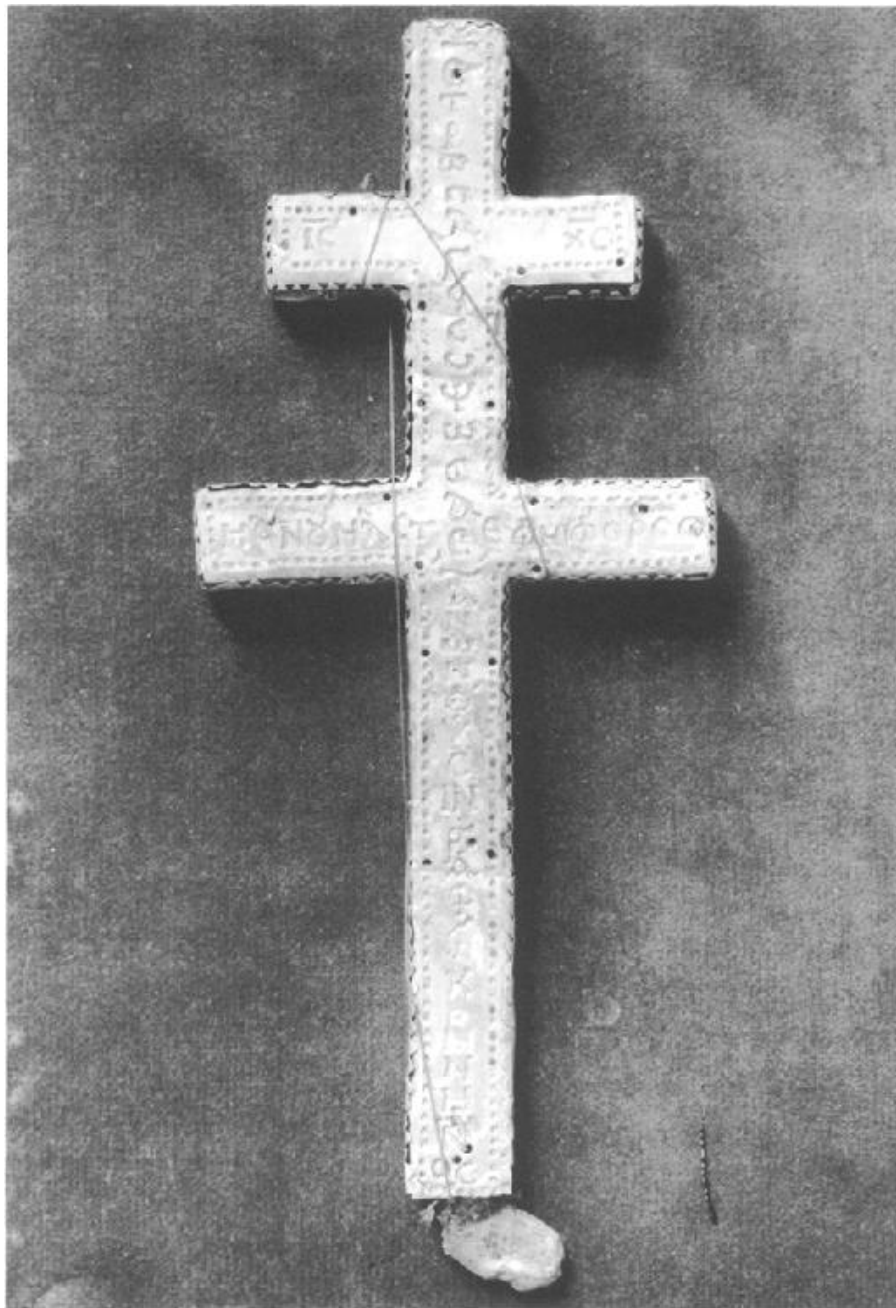
imperial way. There is now only one record of such a procession, but it does support this hypothesis. In a marginal note added to a late-thirteenth-century synaxarion it is recorded that, on 9 April 1395, Antonios of Trebizond processed from the monastery of the Stylos to Hagia Sophia, where he was ordained as metropolitan by bishop Kallistratos of Chaldia in front of the emperors Manuel III and Alexios IV, archontes, bishops, clergy, abbots, priests, hieromonks and the public. After the ceremony all processed on horseback to the palace.³¹ The implications of this small note are important: at the end of the fourteenth century Hagia Sophia was still an important imperial centre, a fitting setting for major investitures. Moreover, it was the starting point for an imperial procession returning to the palace in the city. The concentration of the populace of Trebizond to the east of the ravine would mean that that area would always have to remain as a centre for imperial ceremonial, and the *meydan* is known to have been the site for the Easter acclamation of the Grand Komnenoi.³² The construction of Hagia Sophia allowed ceremonial to be conducted on a much grander scale, a scale in line with the imperial pretensions of the Grand Komnenoi.

More evidence about the importance of ceremonial in Trebizond comes from the use of icons and relics by the new dynasty. The processions in Trebizond seem to derive from those associated with the Komnenoi in Constantinople; many of them based around the Pantokrator monastery. The icon of the Theotokos Hodegetria played a central role in both centres. Its importance in Constantinople is well known, and we have already seen the importance of the version of the icon that was kept in Trebizond in the siege of 1222/3. The *typikon* of the Pantokrator monastery calls for the Constantinopolitan icon to be carried from its home monastery to the imperial mausoleum church on the anniversaries of the deaths of John II, Eirene and their son Alexios.³³ It had long been regarded as the principal palladium of the capital: John II Komnenos called it his ‘unconquerable fellow general’,³⁴ and later, in 1187, Isaak II Angelos was to lead it in procession to the walls of the city where it was hung as a defence against the rebellion of Alexios Branas.³⁵ It had also been seized upon by rival dynasties abroad to sanctify their kingdoms. Roger II of Sicily placed a mosaic version of it in the Cappella Palatina in Palermo on the wall above the north apse, in close proximity to the ‘royal box’.³⁶

The question remains whether the prominence of the icon in Trebizond in 1222/3 represents a specific attempt by Andronikos Gidon to recreate its imperial and Constantinopolitan associations in exile.³⁷ To some extent it can be seen as just another example of the general veneration of the Hodegetria throughout the empire; evidence from Thessaloniki and Antioch indicates that processions of icons of

the Hodegetria played an integral role in the civic life of all Byzantine urban centres.³⁸ However, the imperial presence in Trebizond must have changed this. Andronikos must have been conscious of the particular associations of the icon, and exploited that to his own ends. His association with the icon gave it that imperial, Constantinopolitan resonance which would embellish his own power, and which was enhanced by the fact that the Constantinopolitan original was kept locked away by the Venetians in the Pantokrator monastery.³⁹ Although the icon probably already existed in Trebizond long before 1204, its meaning was transformed by the arrival of the Grand Komnenoi. Andronikos's interest in the Hodegetria pre-empts that of Michael VIII later in the century, when his first act on reaching Constantinople was to order that the icon be brought out to him at the Golden Gate.⁴⁰ It must be remembered, however, that any Constantinopolitan desires were tempered by political realities, and the prominence given also to the relics of St Eugenios, the patron saint of the city, reflects the localised importance of Byzantine cults (and the explicit bias of Lazaropoulos's text).

The one other surviving object that can be connected to Manuel I Grand Komnenos provides further evidence about the importance of sacred objects to the definition of the monarchy. The object is a small relic of the True Cross, now in the treasury of Notre-Dame at Paris (Fig. 28).⁴¹ The fragment of the True Cross, crafted in the shape of the cross, has a silver cover, with an enamel inscription that reads:
 IC XC Στ[αυ]ρῷ παγεις ὕψωσας ἀν[θρώπ]ων
 φύσιν. Γράφει Κομνηνός Μανουήλ στεφηφόρος
 'Jesus Christ, attached to the cross, you have lifted up the nature of men. Manuel Komnenos, who wears the crown wrote this'.⁴² The palaeography of the inscription dates the object to the twelfth or thirteenth century, but the poor quality of the enamel work, especially in comparison with other work produced in Komnenian Constantinople, rules out Manuel I Komnenos (1143–80) as its patron. It must, therefore, belong to Manuel I of Trebizond. The physical appearance of this cross is now relatively insignificant (especially compared to the great *staurothekai* of the tenth century), but as a symbol of the divine recognition of imperial power in the Middle Ages it was unmatched. Possession of the relic was far more important than its appearance, although that does indicate the limits of the artistic skills that Manuel could call upon in his kingdom.



28 Reliquary of the True Cross of Manuel Komnenos. Now in the treasury of Notre-Dame, Paris, it was in the Polish royal treasury by 1475

The greatest collection of relics of the True Cross were kept in the various churches of Constantinople.⁴³ They were the most precious

relics held by the Byzantine emperors, and one of the principal demonstrations of the divine origin of their authority.⁴⁴ They acted as evidence of the close relationship between emperor and Christ, and of the emperor's role as the guardian of Christ's legacy on earth. The relics of the True Cross also served to prove Byzantine continuity back through Heraklios's recapture of the Cross in 641, to its original discovery by Helena. The Fourth Crusade destroyed this relationship. It drove the Greek emperors away from the relics that they had guarded and cherished for so many centuries, and broke the link between them and Christ. They could no longer be seen so clearly as the representatives of Christ on earth. The looting of these relics after 1204 and the transportation of so many of them to the west, where they became the centrepieces of western royal (and other) relic collections, further undermined the Greek position.⁴⁵

The loss of so many relics of the True Cross placed even more importance on those fragments that remained in the east. The period after 1204 saw a renewed interest in their decoration and veneration throughout the Christian east. In every case the revival was led by those in authority, and so should be seen as an attempt to recreate the symbolism of authority and divine approval that had attached itself to the True Cross in previous centuries.

There is a clear pattern that can be traced round the eastern Mediterranean in the decades around 1204. The defeat of Baldwin, the first Latin emperor of Constantinople, by the Bulgarians in 1205 was partially attributed to his leaving his relic of the True Cross behind.⁴⁶ And perhaps it was in response to this that his successor Henry commissioned a particularly fine staurotheke (now in the treasury of San Marco) that makes specific reference to the protection in war that the relic could offer him.⁴⁷ The newly emergent Serbian monarchy also displayed a strong interest in the True Cross, giving fragments to their major royal monasteries, Studenica in 1199, Zica (between 1222 and 1228), and Sopocani (between 1273 and 1314).⁴⁸ John III Vatatzes, emperor of Nicaea, used his holdings of fragments of the True Cross to portray himself as the legitimate emperor of Byzantium, giving relics to important potential allies, including St Sava at the monastery of Chilandari, and Fra Elia de' Coppi, the envoy of Frederick II in 1246.⁴⁹ Even lesser rulers seeking recognition and legitimacy employed the same ideas, although less successfully. Ivane Mqardgrdeli, the newly-Chalcedonian joint ruler of Monophysite Armenia faced a difficult law case when he attempted to claim a fragment of the True Cross for himself from a Monophysite monastery in c. 1210.⁵⁰

These cases serve to demonstrate the attention given to the relics of Christ's passion, and particularly those of the True Cross in the

decades after 1204. In every case, rulers were concerned to acquire, venerate and be seen in possession of these central relics. Like churches and palaces, these relics were another form of materialising imperial power. They were a way of gaining allies, and thereby codifying a hierarchy of rulers in the region, with the true Byzantine emperor, the only man who could offer the relics as gifts, standing at the head.⁵¹ Manuel's cross suggests that he was no different from his rivals and neighbours, and hoped to use the power of the cross to reflect on himself as well. The relatively poor quality of the reliquary indicates the limited resources within which Manuel was seeking create his image.

This interpretation of the architecture and ritual associated with Hagia Sophia suggests that the Grand Komnenoi were acting in accordance with standard Byzantine and indeed with broader Christian, preoccupations. Their desire to present themselves as true Christian rulers, and as the legitimate claimants to the imperial throne in Constantinople, required them to act as model rulers even while in exile. They may have hoped that Trebizond would only be a temporary residence, but it still required all the trappings necessary to display imperial power while they remained in the city. Manuel's immediate predecessors had begun this process, building or upgrading the imperial palace in the citadel and creating a coronation church out of the Chrysokephalos. They had also begun to create an association with the great icons and relics of the city, using them to recreate the imperial ceremonial of Constantinople in Trebizond. Manuel I continued this by adding a suitable dynastic mausoleum church, which was well placed to act as a focus of longer and grander processions. He also managed to acquire a fragment of the True Cross, another signifier of Constantinopolitan imperial pretensions, which he suitably dignified.

Chapter 4

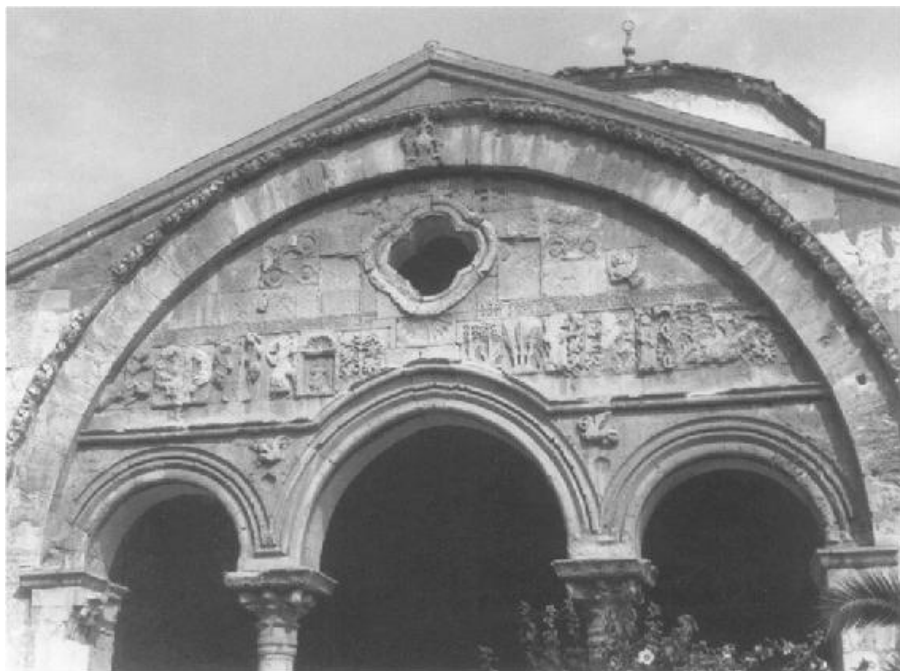
Adam, exile and ‘Byzantine’ sculpture

The exterior of Hagia Sophia is adorned with a wide range of sculptural reliefs. The sculptures are concentrated on the three porches, although one or two pieces are found elsewhere, notably an eagle on the exterior of the main apse. Most of this carving is in the form of decorative panels, generally of interlace ornament, but there is also an extensive array of figurai imagery. The figurai reliefs are concentrated on the south porch, the largest and grandest entrance to the church ([Fig. 29](#)). A number of isolated sculptures appear on this porch, but it is dominated by a long frieze of figures that runs across its full width. These provide the first substantive programme with a clear narrative or interpretative intent that is visible on approaching the church. Whereas the interpretation of the architecture of Hagia Sophia was necessarily tentative, we can be sure that here a meaning was intended. This chapter concentrates on the figurai sculpture, and especially on the narrative frieze; the interlace and ornamental plaques are discussed separately in [chapter 5](#).

Monumental figurai sculpture is relatively rare in Byzantine art, and the few pieces that are known to have been carved especially for display in churches are mostly in the form of low relief icons,¹ or corbel sculptures.² It can be contrasted with the reuse of classical sculpture as *spolia* on façades, which has often been seen as an apotropaic device. This can be seen both in churches and city fortifications, such as the sarcophagus that Basil I reused as a lintel at

St Anne in Trebizond (Fig. 21), the miscellany of fragments that appears on the façade of the Panagia Gorgoepikoos in Athens,³ or the pieces included in the walls of Konya and Ankara.⁴ The commissioning of a new narrative relief frieze at Hagia Sophia designates the church as lying outside the Byzantine ‘norm’.⁵ As with the architecture of the church, then, we seem to be faced with a medium that lies outside of the Byzantine mainstream. The question remains, however, whether the message that is contained in the sculpture is as alien as the medium.

With the exception of the long narrative frieze that runs across the width of the south porch, there appears to be no consistent scheme or coherent message among the other figurative images. The keystone of the porch is crowned by a majestic eagle with a halo and outstretched wings, which echoes that on the main apse of the church. It has often been suggested that these eagles are heraldic symbols of the Grand Komnenoi, and they are discussed at greater length in the context of the portrait of Manuel I in chapter 8 (Fig. 96). A third eagle appears lower down on the tympanum (Fig. 30). This eagle also has a halo, but it is accompanied by an inscription – ὁ ἀ[γίος] Μάρκος; St Mark – that identifies it as an evangelist symbol.⁶ It has no counterparts, and the logical locations for the other three evangelist symbols are taken up by other sculptures. The equivalent space to the left of the central quatrefoil has only the remains of a small boss, which can never have held a sculpture like the eagle.⁷ Mythological beasts take up the two spandrels below the frieze: a centaur with bow and arrow (perhaps representing Sagittarius),⁸ and a *semnurv* or griffin with a long twisted neck (Figs 31 and 32).⁹ Similarly, the few remaining inlay panels on the south façade present a very varied selection, including a panel with doves and pomegranates (Fig. 33), which echoes early Christian designs;¹⁰ and a whorl of fish, which looks to Iranian models (Fig. 34).¹¹



29 Tympanum of south porch of Hagia Sophia. The rich array of sculpture and eagle keystone mark this out as the principal entrance to the church



30 Eagle on south porch of Hagia Sophia, labelled $\delta \alpha [\gamma \iota \omicron \varsigma]$ **Μαρκος**; St Mark. This unusual pairing of evangelist and symbol is continued in the wall paintings in the church



31 Sagittarius in the west spandrel of the south porch of Hagia Sophia



32 *Semnurv* or griffin in the east spandrel of the south porch of Hagia Sophia

Such an *ad hoc* arrangement of elements has parallels in Byzantium,¹² Rus,¹³ and Georgia,¹⁴ although these do not draw on such a diverse cultural range as at Trebizond. The combination of elements at Trebizond perhaps tells more about the desire for decoration rather than about the cultural orientation of the society that produced it, let alone its political ideology. They mix political, theological, astrological, mythological and decorative images in one façade. The decoration of Hagia Sophia, then, seems to combine a series of images with a variety of meanings (or lack of them). The notable exception to this is the long narrative frieze.



33 Inlay plaque with intertwined doves and pomegranates above the central quatrefoil of the south porch at Hagia Sophia. A similar motif of intertwined birds is seen on one of the capitals in the west porch



34 Inlay plaque with a whorl of fish to west of the central quatrefoil of the south porch at Hagia Sophia. Similar designs appear in Ilkhanid (Iranian) and Mamluk ceramics

The narrative frieze: description

The high relief sculptural frieze forms a long, narrow band across the porch, approximately 8 m by 75 cm, and contains seven scenes accompanied by two carved inscriptions (Figs 35–38). The scenes tell the story of the Fall of Man, from Genesis chapter IV.¹⁵ Unusually the narrative starts at the right hand (eastern) end with the Creation of

Eve, and then continues to the left with the Temptation of Eve, and Adam taking the forbidden fruit. The frieze breaks at the centre to accommodate the central arch of the porch, and then continues on the west half with the Closed gate of Eden, and the Expulsion, which includes Adam and Eve lamenting. This scene is followed by a similar scene of the protoplasts lamenting, this time sitting down. The frieze ends with Cain's murder of Abel.¹⁶



35 West (concluding) half of the Genesis frieze on the south porch at Hagia Sophia



37 Drawing of the west (concluding) half of the Genesis frieze on the south porch at Hagia Sophia

The frieze, when examined as a single composition, is uneven and inconsistent. The figures vary in size considerably both between scenes and within them, especially in the scene of the Expulsion from Eden. The depth of carving appears to vary considerably as well, although this is harder to determine now, given the erosion which the frieze has suffered. It seems that each block was carved separately with little consideration of the appearance of those around it. There is no consistent sense of movement across the frieze. Only one figure, the angel of the Expulsion, is shown in a dynamic pose, the rest are static. The frieze appears to be divided into a series of paired tableaux. However, the depiction of dress is fairly consistent across the frieze, with all robes carved in a single plane with many shallow, incised

lines to indicate folds. Gestures are also repeated with little variation. But other than these relatively minor points there seems to have been little attempt at creating a unified whole.

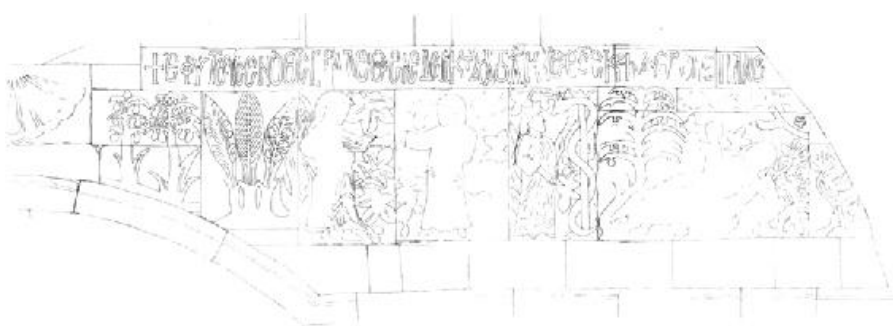
Each half of the frieze, however, is clearly themed and has some internal cohesion. On the right hand side the glory and richness of life before the Fall is indicated by the clothed figures of Adam and Eve (the clothes represent the robes of grace) and by the luxuriant foliage which fills every inch of the background to the centre of the arch and beyond to the gate of Paradise. On the left hand side, the aridity and pain of life outside Eden manifests itself in the nudity of the figures, the barrenness of the setting – there is no foliage here – and in the oft repeated gesture of lamentation, the hand raised to the face.¹⁷ A few surviving fragments of paint were noticed on the frieze by its modern restorers, although none is visible from the ground.¹⁸ This suggests that the frieze was originally painted, which would have made the visual opposition between Eden and Exile much starker.

The function of the frieze

The clearest guidance as to how to interpret the frieze comes from the inscriptions that stand above each half of the frieze. These are incised in a clear majuscule script with few abbreviations or ligatures. The inscription on the left, which would be read first, comes from the Lenten Triodion:



36 East (opening) half of the Genesis frieze on the south porch at Hagia Sophia



38 Drawing of the east (opening) half of the Genesis frieze on the south porch at Hagia Sophia

† Ἐκ[άθισε] [ε]ν Ἀδ[άμ] ἀπέ[ναντι] τοῦ Παρ[αδεί]σου καὶ τὴν ἰδίαν γύμνωσιν θρην[ώ]ν
 ὠδύρετο

†Adam sat before Paradise and, lamenting his nakedness, he wept.¹⁹

That on the right comes from Genesis 2.8:

† Ἐφύτευσεν ὁ Θε[ός] Παράδεισον ἐν Ἑδ[έμ] κ[α]τ[ὰ] ἀνατολάς καὶ ἔθετ[ο] ἐκεῖ τὸν
 ἀνθ[ρώπο]ν ὃν ἐπλασε

†And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed.

Each can be associated with the section of frieze below it. Monumental liturgical inscriptions are very rare on the façades of Byzantine churches, giving this inscription definite emphasis. This indicates that the frieze would have had a particular topicality at certain times in the liturgical year; and this provides an immediate meaning for the frieze. The inscription from the Triodion was intoned as part of the Vespers service on the eve of the Sunday before Lent (the Sunday of Forgiveness).²⁰ And the right hand half of the inscription, the verse from Genesis 2.8, formed part of Vespers on the first Thursday of Lent.²¹ Adam and Eve, and Cain and Abel all featured prominently during Lenten homilies.²²

This indicates that the church of Hagia Sophia certainly adhered to the normal Orthodox liturgical calendar, and that at the beginning of Lent it must have played an important role in the ecclesiastical calendar of the Empire of Trebizond. Bryer has shown how, in the fourteenth century, the Feast of the Transfiguration was the patronal day of the church, but these inscriptions suggest that when the church was built, the start of Lent was the most important occasion to be celebrated at Hagia Sophia.²³ It would only be in this one week of the year that the full significance of the frieze and its inscriptions would

become apparent as the meanings of the images and texts were brought to life by the service. It had a performative function.²⁴

The emphasis demonstrated by the frieze – this is the only element of the church's narrative decoration to be built into the architecture – shows that it must be regarded as a central feature of the church's (or at least the porch's) function when it was built. At Trebizond, it is only by entering the church that the viewers were able to re-enter Paradise. Two elements further reinforce this idea of the porch being the entrance to Paradise on earth. The shell design over the main arch of the porch echoes that in the image of the gate of Paradise on the frieze (albeit upside down). The vine scroll on the hood moulding around the outside of the porch (Fig. 39) echoes the Georgian use of this motif, where it is a symbol of eternal life and redemption.²⁵ The location of the frieze, at the threshold of the church, creates part of its meaning and forces its viewers to take part in the narrative as they prepare to enter the church.

The selective nature of the narrative, which runs from the Creation of Eve to the Murder of Abel but excludes the image of the brothers' sacrifice, concentrates on the arrival of sin and death among mankind. It has few direct visual counterparts in Byzantine art.²⁶ The only objects on which a comparable section of Genesis is shown are a number of Byzantine ivory and bone caskets, variously dated between the tenth and twelfth centuries.²⁷ The iconography of these vary, but generally include the Creation of Adam and Eve, the Temptation, the Expulsion, Adam and Eve lamenting outside Eden, and the Murder of Abel. These ivories show that the narrative range at Trebizond belonged to a wider tradition in Byzantium, but they cannot help to elucidate its meaning.²⁸



39 Vine scroll decoration on the hood moulding around the south porch at Hagia Sophia. Depictions of vines are common in Georgian church decoration

In order to understand the frieze, it is necessary to see it as just one part of a programme encompassing the whole church. It fits into a visual and textual scheme of typology. The eucharistie emphasis on death and sacrifice, Abel as a type of Christ,²⁹ is reiterated on entering the naos through the south porch. Here the viewer is immediately faced with images of the Crucifixion and Anastasis on the north wall of the church (although both are now very fragmentary). The emphasis on Eve as the bringer of death finds its counterpoint in the image of Mary, the mother of God and bringer of salvation. The idea of Mary as the second Eve was well established in Byzantium and the west, and allusions are often made in art.³⁰

Images that allude to the Mary and the incarnation are prominent in the surviving wall paintings on the north and east walls of the north porch. Again these are dominated by Old Testament allusions,

including Jacob's Ladder; Jacob's Struggle with the Angel; Moses and the Burning Bush (Figs 40 and 41), Gideon and the Fleece, and the Tree of Jesse.³¹ These were all recognised as prototypes of the virgin birth and are reflected on the twelfth-century icon of the Mother of God and Child surrounded by Old Testament Prophets and Saints in the collection of St. Catherine's Monastery on Mount Sinai.³² It is also noteworthy that the Tree of Jesse culminates in the figure of Mary, rather than that of Christ (Figs 42 and 43).³³ The existence of a cycle of typological images at Trebizond presages the greater interest in such monumental typological campaigns in Palaiologan art, as, for example at the Theotokos Peribleptos (now Sv. Kliment) at Ohrid (1295).³⁴ The narthex at this church repeats many of the same scenes as in the north porch at Trebizond. This indicates the currency of the images at Trebizond, and suggests that the empire was at the forefront of such theological developments in the Orthodox world in the mid thirteenth century.³⁵



40 Wall painting on north wall of north porch, Hagia Sophia. Upper register: Jacob's ladder, Jacob's struggle with the angel and Moses before the burning bush. West spandrel: Job on a dunghill; east spandrel: Gideon and the fleece



41 Schema of Upper register of north wall of north porch, Hagia Sophia



42 The Tree of Jesse on the east wall and vault of north porch, Hagia Sophia. Unusually, this version culminates in the figure of the Virgin rather than of Christ



43 Schema of Tree of Jesse on the east wall and vault of north porch, Hagia Sophia

The typological frescoes establish another line of progression through the church, from Eve as the bringer of sin in the south porch to Mary as the bringer of salvation in the north porch. This raises two points. The first is that the church and its porches may have had their own processional structure. Given the scale of the porches they must have been designed for large gatherings of people, possibly moving about as part of the service. The second is that the links between the porches argue that the programme of the church was designed in advance and included both frescoes and sculpture.

Thus, the most striking feature of the frieze is that, despite the medium used, the message seems to lie within the mainstream of Orthodoxy. This can be confirmed by looking at the other, more unusual aspects of the narrative and its depiction, notably the use of reverse narrative and the inversion of Adam and Eve being clothed before the Fall and naked afterwards. These have traditionally been ascribed to 'Oriental' influences (that is, to the artistic devices unconsciously brought by the frieze's presumed Syriac creators), and

taken as evidence of the 'alien' nature of the sculpture.³⁶ Such an argument takes the artists' training and limitations as the principal source of meaning, but it nevertheless has a certain validity that will be examined later. First, it is possible to demonstrate that these unusual characteristics do have a meaning within the mainstream of Byzantine art and theology.

This is most apparent with the representation of the nakedness of Adam and Eve after the Fall. This inversion can most simply be explained by reference to the Lenten Triodion and to the inscription accompanying the sculptures. In the course of the service of Vespers on the eve of the Sunday of Forgiveness, Adam is described no less than four times as being naked outside Paradise: 'In my wretchedness I have cast off the robe woven by God ...'; 'Naked he sat outside the garden, lamenting ...'; 'Adam sat before Paradise and, lamenting his nakedness, he wept'; 'Woe is me! In my simplicity I was stripped naked, and now I am in want.'³⁷ The third quotation was that used as the inscription to accompany the frieze. It is clear from this that the artists and craftsmen had been instructed to illustrate the liturgical *not* the biblical account of the Fall, and so needed to show the move from clothed to naked, rather than the other way round.³⁸ If part of the service took place before this frieze, it simply would not have made sense if the Biblical version of the Genesis narrative had been followed. The reversal is found elsewhere in Byzantine art: two Octateuch manuscripts (Vat. gr. 746, fol. 37r; and Istanbul Topkapi gr. 8, fol. 42v) also show the protoplasts clothed before the Fall.³⁹ The decision to depict the story in this way seems to have derived from interpretations of Genesis 3.8, which states that after Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit they 'perceived themselves to be naked.' From this evolved a theology about prelapsarian garments, the robes of grace or light, which kept their nakedness hidden until that moment.⁴⁰ This idea also appears in more popular literature, such as the apocryphal Books of Adam⁴¹. It seems, then, that the artists were following an existing, if uncommon, trend to emphasise the nature of the Fall, and the loss of the divine glory which surrounded Adam and Eve.

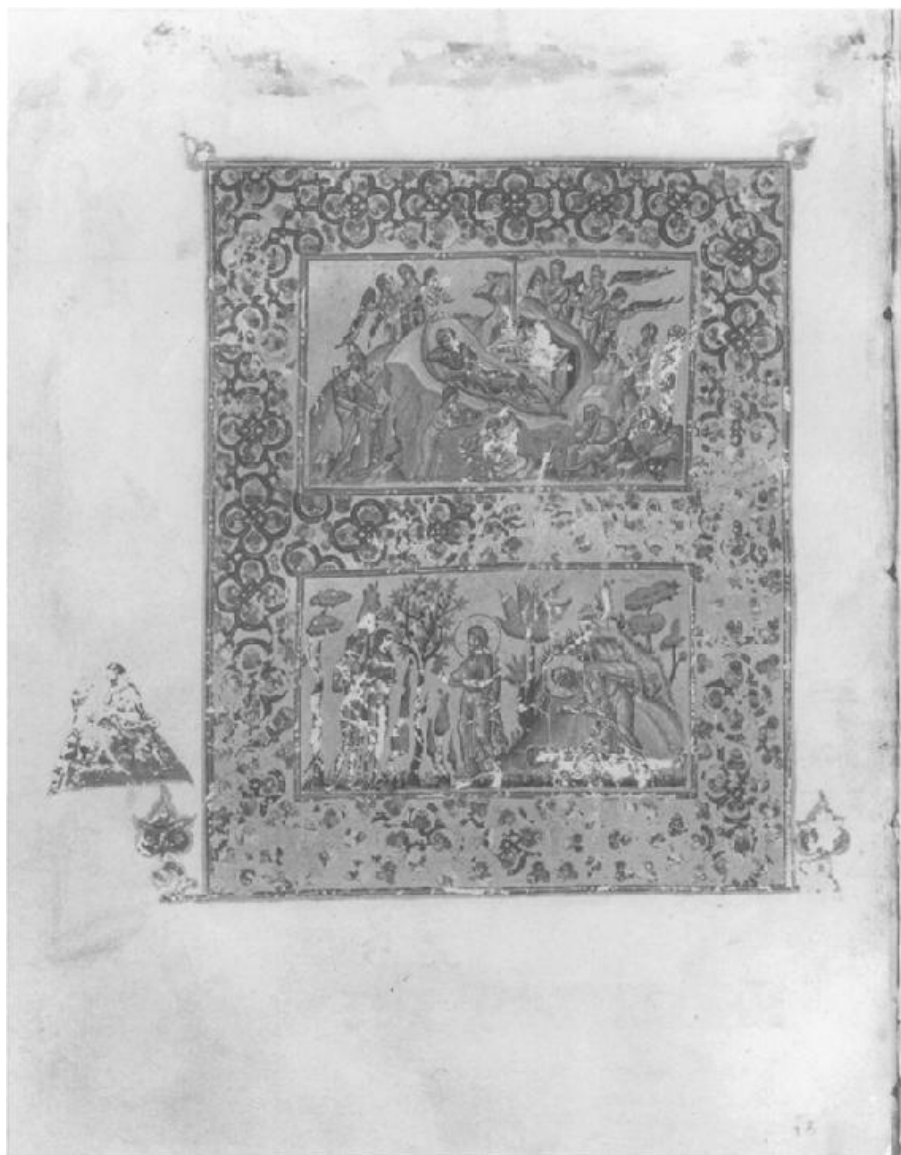


44 Plaque showing the Expulsion, probably thirteenth century. This is now incorporated into the walls of the citadel of Trebizond, by the east ravine

The visual anomaly of reverse narrative can also be examined in terms of mainstream Byzantine theology and art. Reverse narrative is used in Byzantine art, although admittedly not very often, but it is significant that it occurs in other images of the Fall. It is noteworthy that a second example of the Expulsion with reverse narrative can be found at Trebizond. This is a small plaque now located high in the east wall of the citadel, across the ravine from the church of St. Eugenios, where it is barely visible (Fig. 44).⁴² It has clearly been moved to this location, along with a second image of Elijah and the Raven, and its original context is now lost.⁴³

A more useful comparison is found in a fourteenth-century copy of the Homilies of Gregory of Nazianzos in Paris (Bib. Nat. gr. 543).⁴⁴ This provides a means of understanding how reverse narrative could be used in images of the Fall in Byzantium. This 'liturgical edition' of the homilies, contains sixteen of Gregory's homilies, each preceded by a full-page introductory miniature. In every case, the narrative of the miniature moves from left to right, with one exception.⁴⁵ This is the miniature that precedes homily 38 *On the Nativity/ Theophany* (Fig. 45). The upper register shows the Nativity, conflating the birth of Christ, the Adoration of the Magi and Shepherds and the First Bath of the Christ Child. The lower scene introduces the Fall of Man in three scenes: the Quickening of Adam/Creation of Eve, Adam and Eve in Eden, and Adam and Eve lamenting after the Expulsion.⁴⁶ What is

interesting about the image is that while the upper register has a centralised composition, the lower register reads right to left. The artist has also used the psychological device of placing the scene of Adam and Eve after the Expulsion in the margin, beyond the frame of the miniature, to emphasise man's distance from Paradise. The division between exterior and interior, between richness and aridity parallels that in the frieze at Trebizond very closely.



45 Fourteenth-century copy of the Homilies of Gregory of Nazianzos (Paris, BN gr. 543 fol. 116v), *On the Theophany*. The upper register

shows the Nativity, the lower the Creation and Expulsion. Adam and Eve are shown lamenting the Fall in the left margin of the image

The text of the homily allows this visual device to be explored in more detail. In homily 38, Gregory proclaims the Nativity as man's chance to re-enter into harmony and obedience with God, a contract dissolved at the Fall.⁴⁷ Christ is the new Adam. Gregory explicitly sees the return to innocence as one of the purposes of the Incarnation: 'But [all the mysteries of Christ] have a sole principle: to lead me to perfection, to remodel me, to bring me back to the First Adam/⁴⁸ The image demonstrates this by placing the Nativity and the scenes in Eden within the rich, broad decorative frame of the miniature, reflecting the parallel between the two chances God has offered man, and the parallel between the creations of Christ and Adam. The use of reverse narrative then allows the viewer to replay the trajectory of Gregory's argument visually. The logic of the narrative implies within it a narrative regression as it must be read 'backwards'; but to read the image from left to right allows the viewer to reclaim the steps back to the first Adam.

The obvious conflict between the 'normal' left-to-right reading of the inscriptions above the frieze, and the reverse narrative of the carvings themselves suggests that a similar disjunction was deliberately formulated in order to enact many of the same ideas on entering the church.⁴⁹

The choice of narrative for the frieze raises one further tantalising possibility. This is that the sculpture was also planned to encapsulate the political position of the Grand Komnenoi. It is feasible that a comparison is being made between the exile of Adam and the promise of his redemption, and the exile of the Komnenoi and the hope of their return to Constantinople. The imperial palace in Constantinople had been compared to Eden from the ninth century on,⁵⁰ and a typology of exile certainly existed after 1204, in which the fall of Constantinople was linked to the events of the Old Testament. Niketas Choniates and Theodore I Laskaris both associated their expulsions from the Great City in 1204 with that of Adam and Eve from Eden, and both sought (or hoped to be) a new Moses to lead the lost Constantinopolitans back to glory.⁵¹ In an echo of the use of inverted narrative at Hagia Sophia, Niketas Choniates even saw the expulsion of the patriarch from the city as a perverted antithesis of Christ's entry into Jerusalem.⁵² The frieze at Hagia Sophia suggests that it is possible to read the Grand Komnenoi's fate in similar terms.

The themes of exile and the redemption of Adam recur inside the church as well. It is most evident in a series of medallions containing a

cross in brown superimposed on a cross in green (Fig. 46). Between the arms of the crosses are the following letters:

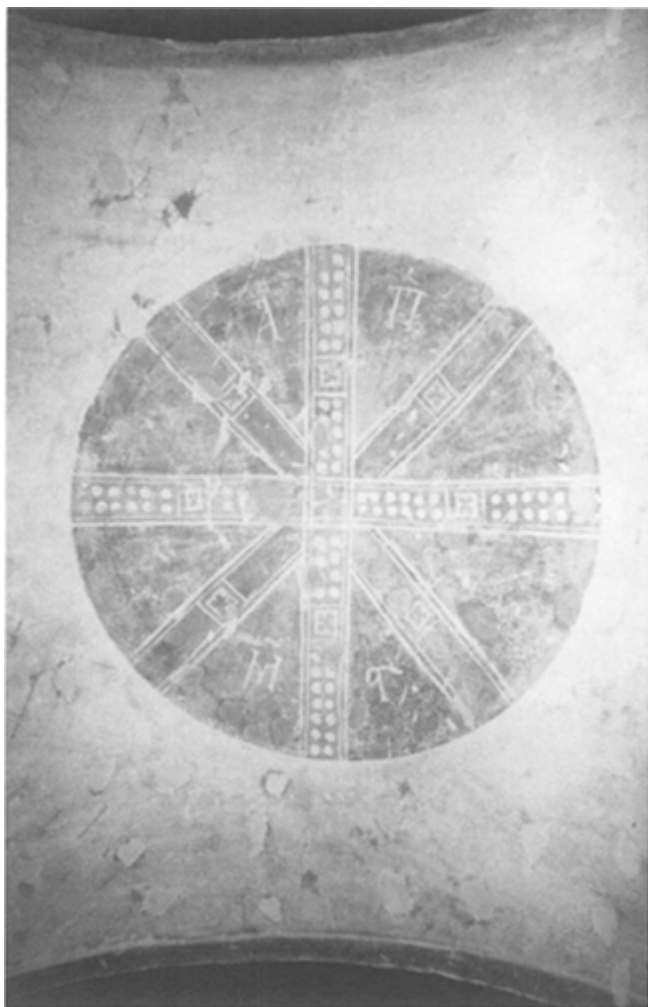
Ã Π Ñ Ç

Αδὰμ πεπτωκὼς μετέστη σταυρῷ

Adam, having fallen, is released by the cross

The medallions with this text appear repeatedly in the church, at the summit of each of the windows of the dome between the figures of the prophets, and in the vault of the arch between the pro thesis and main apse. The acronym is relatively common in Byzantine churches, but in the light of the exterior sculpture it possibly takes on an additional meaning at Trebizond, reinforcing the idea that just as Christ's support will return Adam to paradise, so too it will return the Grand Komnenoi to Constantinople.⁵³

This reading is supported by the main inscription that runs around the base of the dome in the naos, which comes from Psalm 101.20–22: 'Out of the heaven did the Lord behold the earth, that he might hear the mournings of such as are in captivity and deliver the children appointed unto death that they may declare the name of the Lord in Sion and his worship in Jerusalem'. The comparison between the plight of the Israelites and that of the exiled Grand Komnenoi is surely unavoidable here. The dominance of this inscription inside the church must colour any reading of the building, and the implications of this will be examined in greater detail in [chapter 6](#).



46 Cross in the vault of the arch between prothesis and main apse at Hagia Sophia. The inscription reads Α[δάμ] Π[επτωκῶς] Μ[ετέστη] [Adam, having fallen, is released by the cross]

The ‘foreignness’ of the frieze

This chapter has sought to emphasise the mainstream within which it is possible to read the Genesis frieze at Trebizond. It remains a fact, however, that the frieze is an unusual object. As was pointed out above the use of sculpture alone puts the church in a distinct category. The medium of the message stands at odds with the meaning that it conveys. However, it is possible to explain the sculpture by placing it in its regional context. As was shown in chapter one, the political and economic history of the empire makes it possible to locate Trebizond

in contexts centring on its relations with all its neighbours. Georgians, Seljuqs, Syrians and Armenians all feature in the empire, and Mongol trade provided more links to the east, via Tabriz. These provide a different way of contextualizing the relief at Hagia Sophia.

Relief sculpture is relatively common in eastern Anatolia and the Caucasus, and was still part of the regular artistic vocabulary of the Eastern churches in this period.⁵⁴ A low relief carving of the Temptation of Adam and Eve by the serpent is found on the west face of the dome of the church of St John the Baptist at Gandzasar, which is dated 1216–38.⁵⁵ However, iconographically and stylistically few comparisons can be drawn between this image and that at Trebizond. A closer stylistic comparison can be made with the sculpture of the so-called ‘Georgian’ church in Ani (Fig. 47).⁵⁶ Only two reliefs now survive, on the interior north wall of the church. They show the Annunciation and the Visitation, and must once have formed part of a longer cycle of scenes of the early life of Christ which ran round the walls of the church. The images are carved in the tufa used throughout Ani, which results in a cruder style than the frieze at Trebizond, but they are carved to roughly the same scale and depth of relief. We know that they were made by or for the Georgian community in Ani in 1218, when it was the capital of Mqargrdzeli-ruled Armenia.⁵⁷ These suggest that it is to the Caucasus that we must turn in order to understand the context of the decoration of the church properly.



47 Annunciation and Visitation on the interior north wall of the so-called ‘Georgian Church’, at Ani. A now lost inscription gives a terminus ante quern for these carvings of 1218

Similarly, the various other peculiarities of the frieze, such as the inversions of clothed/naked and narrative, which have been explained above in theological terms, can be looked at in regional terms. Both have strong precedents in Syriac, Armenian, Georgian and even Islamic sources. Judged in literary terms, interest in Adam and Eve was very pronounced in Armenian culture, and the many versions of their story circulating in the *Books of Adam* often include the idea of nakedness after the Fall.⁵⁸ Prelapsarian garments are mentioned in the Qur’an and the *hadiths*.⁵⁹ An Ilkhanid translation into Persian of Ibn Bakhtishu’s *Manafi al-hayawan [Benefits of Animals]* (New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, M500, fol. 4v), copied at Maragha in north-west Iran in 1297 or 1299, shows an idealised human couple covering their nudity with (admittedly rather revealing) cloaks.⁶⁰ This is clearly based on Christian Adam and Eve images. Finally, although right-to-left narrative is occasionally found in Byzantine art, it is naturally more prominent in the art of those cultures which write from right-to-left. Manuscripts produced in Syriac and Muslim centres both include a higher percentage of miniatures which run from right to left, such as the Entry to Jerusalem in a Syriac Gospel Lectionary of 1216–20 (London, BL MS Add. 7170, fol. 115r), or the Village scene in al-

Hariri's *Maqamat* of 1237 (Paris, BN MS Ar. 5847, fol. 138r).⁶¹ These show the ways in which local cultural norms could have acted as the sources for the otherwise relatively rare iconographic traits in the frieze. They would certainly also serve to make aspects of the image (if not all its nuances) more comprehensible to some of its local audiences.

All these elements show that the making of the images can be located within a regional context. However, there remains a clear disparity between making and meaning. The problem lies in how to interpret this. Should this be seen as the Grand Komnenoi merely exploiting the local craftsmen and materials that were available to them in order to proclaim their international message? Is it a sign of a deliberate and self-conscious attempt to re-frame their conception of Byzantium: to present its power in new ways? Is it evidence of a less conscious transformation of the Grand Komnenoi into just another localised, regional entity, using the same methods of display as their neighbours? These questions are explored in the next chapter.

Chapter 5

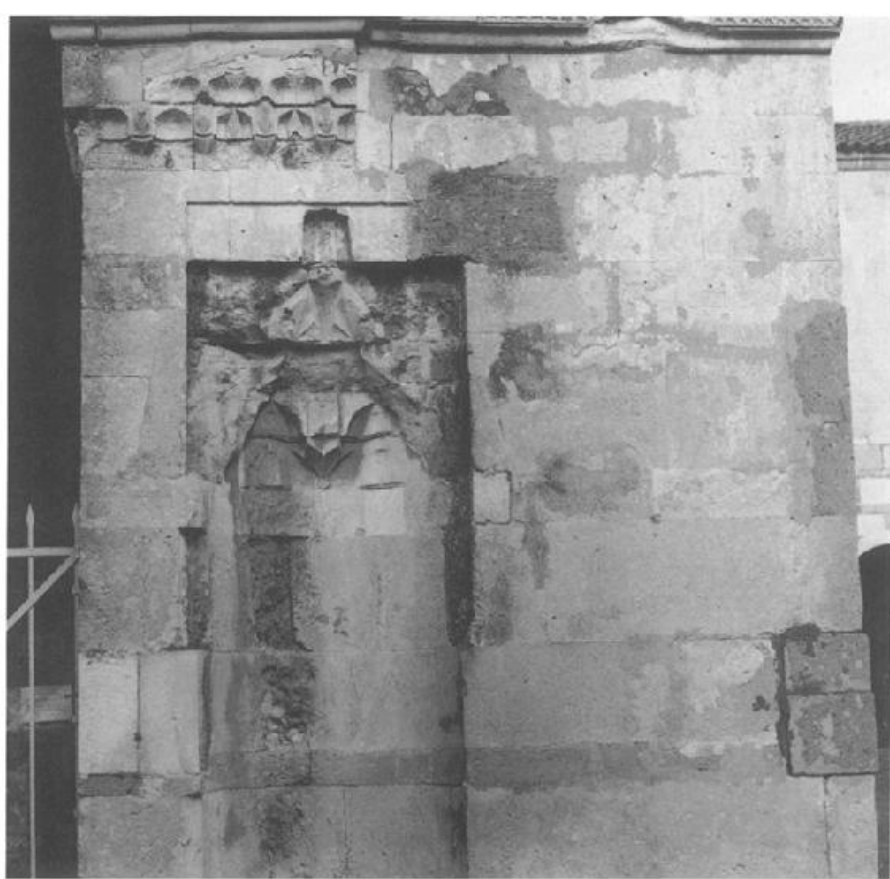
Ornamental sculpture and cultural orientation: Hagia Sophia, the Seljuqs and the Caucasus

The elements of the church that have been discussed so far, the architecture of the church and the Genesis frieze, have raised questions about the influence of local, neighbouring cultures on Trebizond, whether in terms of the function of porches or the significance of right-to-left narrative. These questions are brought more firmly into focus by looking at the final aspect of the exterior decoration of the church of Hagia Sophia, the many pieces of decorative, ornamental carved stonework, which are concentrated on the three porches.

The carved stonework appears in many forms: there is interlocking stalactite vaulting – muqarnas work – in the niches of the west and south porches, as well as on the impost blocks, cornices and capitals of the west and north porches (Fig. 48). Joggled masonry is used on the tympanum of the north porch (Figs 9 and 54). All three porches have geometric or floral interlace carvings, either in large plaques and roundels or on a smaller scale on the facets of the muqarnas work. Eleven roundels and plaques survive, but there is evidence that two more were carved on the west porch. At some later stage these were hacked off to level the surface of the porch (Fig. 49). This was most probably done either to prepare the exterior of the porch for plastering, or because these plaques contained symbols which were no

longer considered acceptable.¹ The south porch also has an elaborate hood moulding of grapevines (Fig. 39).

All the pieces are integral to the construction of the church.² They are mostly made from the same stone as the church, and seem to have been carved specifically for their locations. This is most noticeable in muqarnas impost capitals above the columns in the west porch, which were clearly specifically created for this location as they transfer the broad arches down to the narrow early-Christian columns below; matching exactly the shape of the capitals (Figs 50 and 51). There is also continuity of masonry courses in the niches which demonstrates that they are part of the original design. The foliate design in the roundels at either end of the south porch reappears in the marble inlay floor beneath the dome (Figs 52 and 53). As with the figurai sculpture, there is no overall coherence to the employment of these plaques: on the north porch they appear on the side walls of the porch and even at ground level. Also, there is little consistency in the quality and employment of these decorative elements. The symmetry of the plaques is only approximate, and this can be seen most clearly again on the north porch (Fig. 54). Here, the main design of three roundels above the central arch is supplemented by a more varied arrangement of elements around them. To the east is a very small cross, which resembles a simplified version of those found on Armenian khatchkars (carved stone crosses) (Fig. 55).³ To the west is a large honey-coloured rectangular plaque, in which the geometry of the design is internally inconsistent. The confused geometry of designs recurs frequently in the smaller designs on the various facets of the many muqarnas niches (Fig. 56).⁴ Taken as a whole these sculptural elements are far from the more limited repertoire of decorative motifs seen in the rest of Byzantium in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.



48 West porch of Hagia Sophia. Complex muqarnas work is visible in the niche and below the cornice

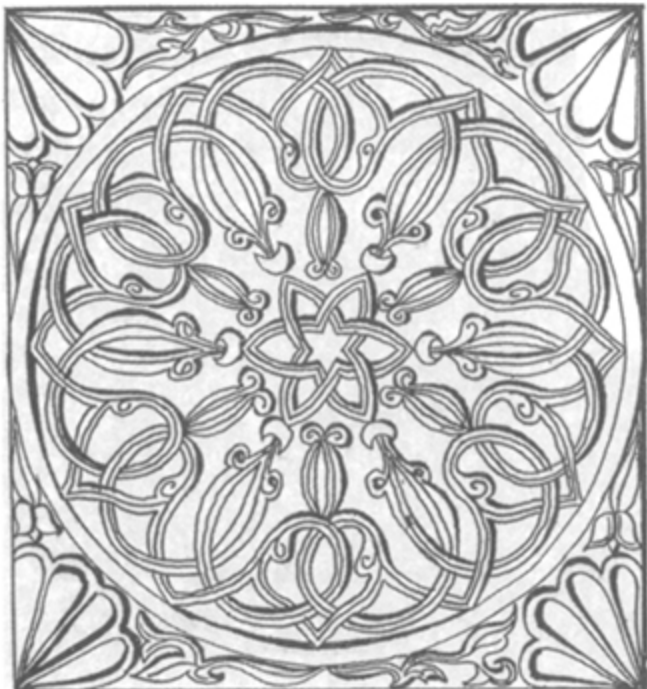


49 West porch of Hagia Sophia. The remains of the plaque that has been hacked off can be seen between the two openings

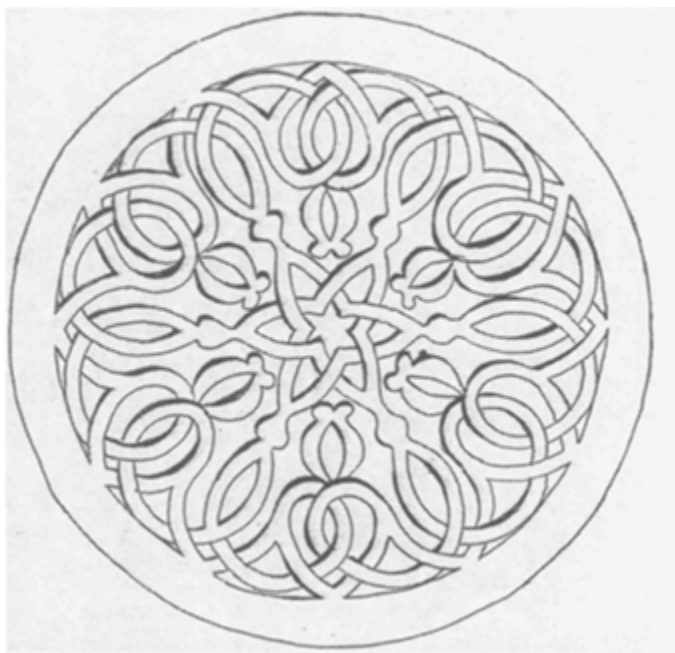




50 and 51 Columns of west porch at Hagia Sophia. In both cases the muqarnas impost blocks were designed to accommodate the different re-used early Christian capitals



52 Floral interlace plaque from east side of south porch at Hagia Sophia



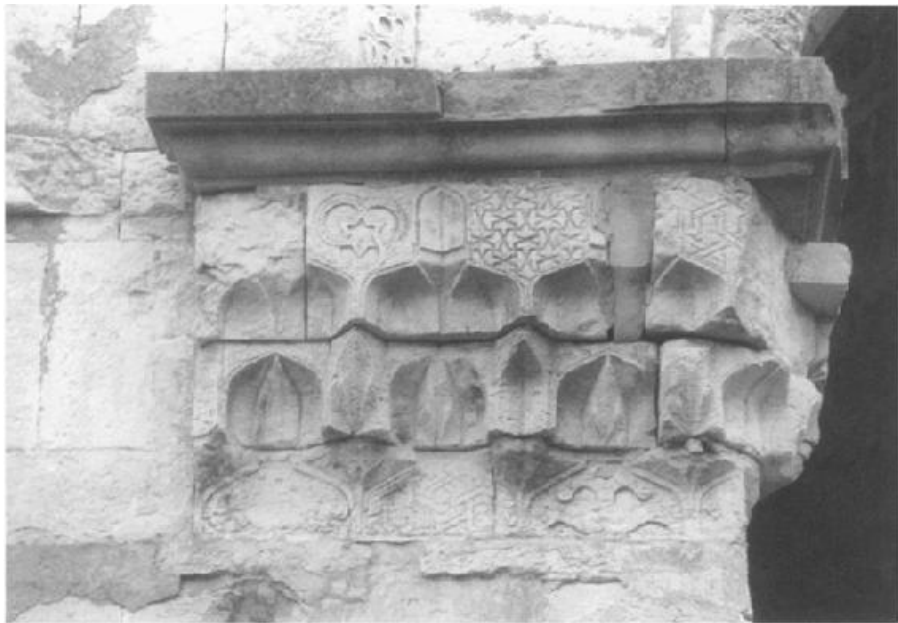
53 Floral interlace plaque from floor of naos of Hagia Sophia



54 North porch at Hagia Sophia, showing arrangement of plaques



55 Cross above east column of north porch at Hagia Sophia. The design derives from Armenian khatchkars



56 West face of muqarnas cornice at north end of west porch at Hagia Sophia. Each facet has a different design carved into it

Based on the formal characteristics of the muqarnas work and geometric designs, Tamara Talbot Rice characterised the sculpture as being ‘Seljuqid’ in form, and produced a series of close visual parallels with Islamic monuments on the Anatolian plateau.⁵ She concluded that, as an ensemble, the carvings provided important evidence of the influence of Seljuq culture on Trebizond (although she argued that the ‘incoherent’ designs suggest that non-Muslim, probably Armenian, craftsmen were also involved). This association raises important questions about the interpretation of the church, and about perceptions of Manuel I and his empire. If these elements are to be interpreted as in some way Islamic (or at least deriving from an Islamic culture), then how are they to be reconciled with their appearance on a Christian church? Does it represent some form of cultural, political or ideological relationship (whether equal or subservient) between the empire and Seljuq Rum? Or is it more simply evidence of aesthetic syncretism and common fashions in Anatolia? Does art reflect social and cultural trends, or does it have a more complex role to play: can evidence of visual ‘influence’ be directly related to historical events, whether political and cultural?

More specifically, how did Manuel reconcile the appearance of these ‘Seljuqid’ elements with his own perceptions of the empire, and his desire to promote himself as the emperor of the Romans? After all,

at first sight the presence of Islamic ornament would seem undermine our common perceptions of a Christian Byzantium. This is important as it can reveal much about the nature of Manuel's proclamation of Byzantine identity. At first sight, these plaques would seem to confirm the conclusions of some modern historians that Trebizond was a society largely subsumed by the non-Christian powers around it, and hence that its history must also lie beyond that of Byzantium. However, if we accept Manuel at his word, that he firmly believed that he was the true emperor, then these plaques can be used to provide evidence to explore his idea of empire. They enable us to investigate the degree to which it was transformed through the cultural milieu of Anatolia in this period.

In her initial publication of the sculptures, Tamara Talbot Rice attempted to reconcile the appearance of Seljuqid art in a Byzantine Christian context. She did so by investigating the circumstances under which Manuel might have agreed to the inclusion of these plaques and concluded that there was only one possible explanation. This was that it would have been acceptable and comprehensible at a time of political and military ascendancy over Islam. Tamara Talbot Rice found these conditions in the years immediately after the Mongol victory over the combined forces of Anatolia at the battle of Köseadağ in 1243.⁶ After this the Seljuqs were fatally weakened, but Trebizond, protected from the rest of Turkey by the Pontic Alps, and financed by silk caravans and silver mines, was able to retain much of its independence and power. It would have been at this time, freed again from Seljuq vassalship, that Manuel would have been in a position to celebrate his power. This theory, and the formal comparisons that she listed, also allowed Tamara Talbot Rice to provide a firmer dating for the church, placing it in the 1250s.

In other words, for Talbot Rice, the panels represented an image of Komnenian ascendancy over the Turks and their religion. This has important implications for the study of the ornament. Primarily, it assumes that the panels were not just simple ornament but were overtly ideological symbols of the Seljuqs and Islam which, because of their dislocation, have now become bearers of specifically political meaning. They have become Christian victory 'trophies'. The interpretation depends on the incompatibility of the context. The displacement reverses the religious and ideological meaning of the imagery: the Islamic plaques have been 'converted' to Christianity. Such an argument finds support from Oleg Grabar who, in his survey of the influence of Islam on Byzantine art, concluded that Islamic elements were included 'when Byzantium felt strong enough to incorporate such exotic themes as seemed interesting'.⁷ Hagia Sophia is thereby reconciled to Byzantium.

This 'political' interpretation of the ornamental plaques as Seljuq trophies provides a neat explanation of ornamental stonework. The theory would seem to be confirmed by the presence on the south porch of an inlay plaque containing a star and crescent, traditionally regarded as the political symbol of Islam under the Seljuqs and Ottomans: the *hılal* (Fig. 57).⁸ The addition of the *hılal* among numerous depictions of crosses elsewhere on the façades of Hagia Sophia seems to reflect the tension between Christian and Muslim power in Trebizond, and the desire to display Christian victory in public. However, all political and ideological interpretations of the ornament at Hagia Sophia must be re-examined.⁹ First, it can be questioned whether the *hılal* was as explicitly associated with Islam in this period as many have assumed. The example at Hagia Sophia is the earliest appearance of this symbol in monumental art. It is matched in no other contemporary Seljuq building in Anatolia.¹⁰ Its only appearance in the Muslim Near East in the early thirteenth century is in Mosul, which was ruled by the Zangid family. A series of coins minted by Mas'ud I Zangid and his successors, features on the reverse an unidentified, seated figure holding the crescent in both hands so that it frames his head, while stars hover above his knees.¹¹ However, the star and crescent can also be found on coins produced in contemporary Cilician Armenia.¹² It is clear from this that no set political or religious interpretation of this imagery had yet been established.



57 Inlay panel with star and crescent (*hilal*) on south porch at Hagia Sophia. This is the earliest monumental use of this symbol in Anatolia

The case for geometric ornament carrying specific ideological meaning is even harder to argue. The majority of comparable examples of the incorporation of Islamic elements in Byzantine art which have been given some form of ideological interpretation in fact concern a very different form of decoration. The Islamic-style decoration on the exterior of Hosios Loukas,¹³ on the shields of warrior saints,¹⁴ or around the rim of the so-called mythological bowl in San Marco, Venice,¹⁵ is made up of imitation writing rather than geometric ornament. It was this pseudo-Kufic script (albeit illegible and/or decorative) that was considered as emblematic of Islam in Byzantium, and which therefore had a specifically anti-Muslim ideological or apotropaic value which could be used to counter this rival religion. This emphasis on the image of the word as the bearer of meaning is explained in the writings of George Pachymeres. He records that, in the early fourteenth century, an Islamic bowl was prepared for use in the liturgy at the imperial court, until it was recognised that it included an Islamic inscription. At this point it had to be put aside 'for reasons of conscience'.¹⁶

Any attempt to interpret the ornament on Hagia Sophia must look instead to an explanation that depends on ornament itself, on interlace and design, rather than on depictions of words. Such an alternative is made possible by new discoveries. It is now possible to investigate the decorative stonework at Hagia Sophia in a much broader context than Tamara Talbot Rice was able to in the early 1960s. The opening up of the Caucasus since the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991, and the plethora of new publications on the arts of the Georgians, Armenians and Seljuqs in the past thirty years means that we are now better placed to provide a more nuanced analysis of the sculpture. This new context significantly alters any interpretation of the external decoration of the church.

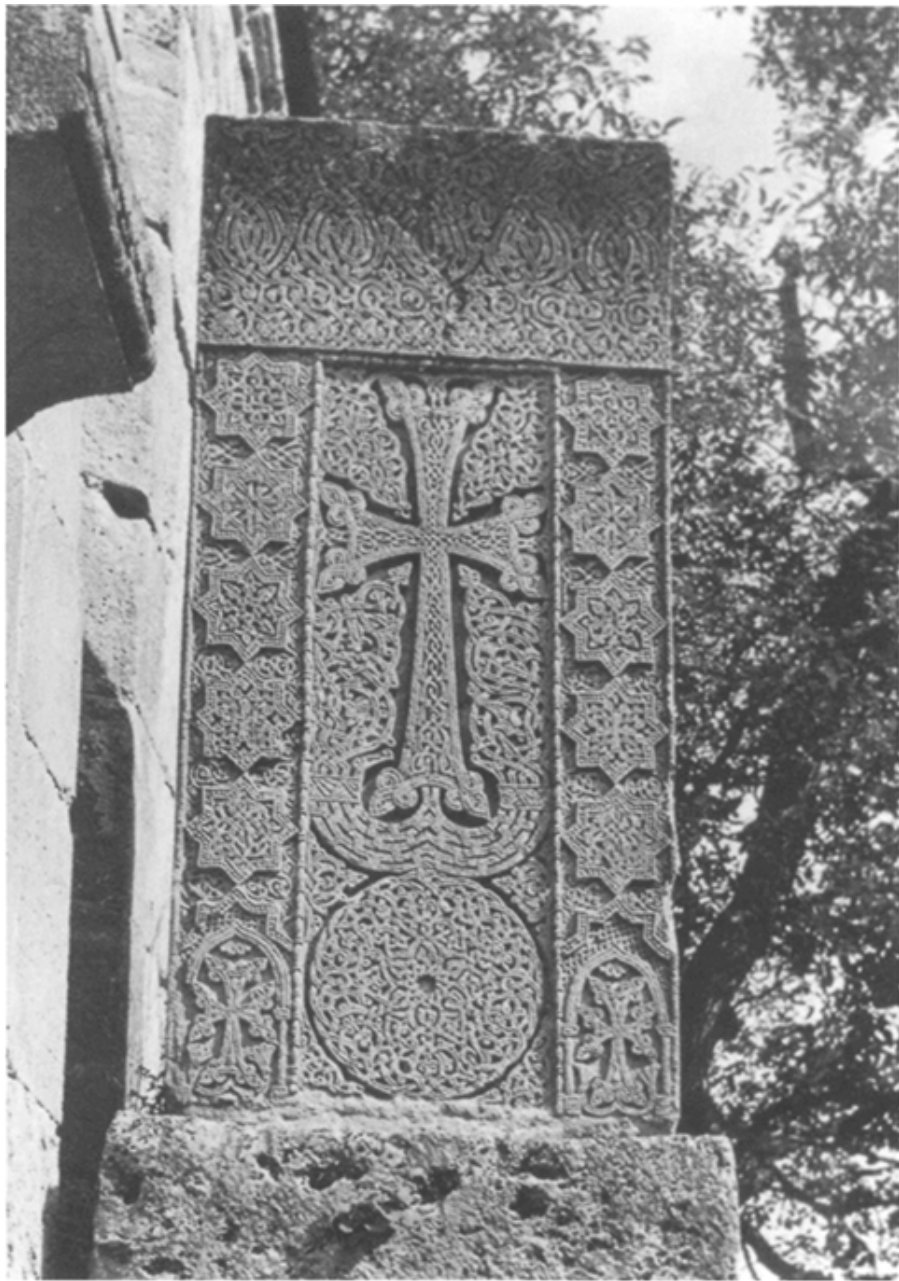
The evidence can be presented most briefly, and most forcefully, at a purely visual level with a series of formal comparisons of some of the designs seen at Hagia Sophia:



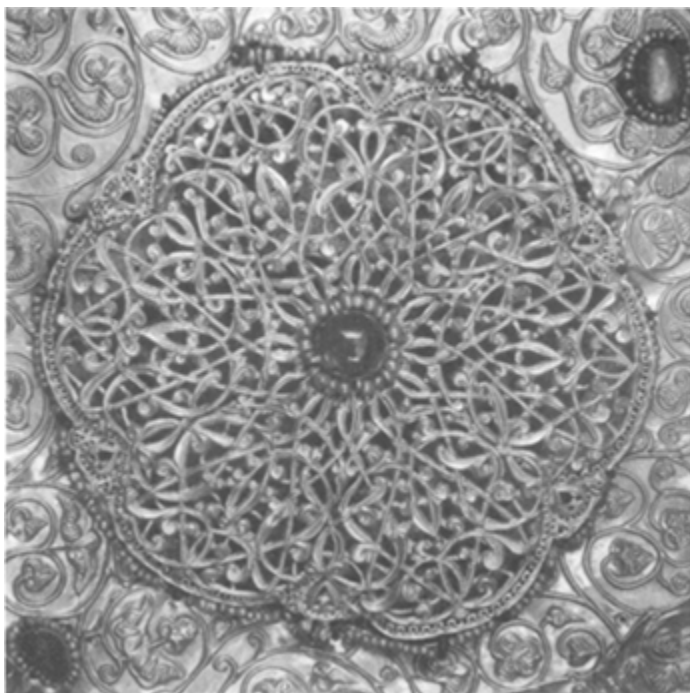
58 Floral interlace plaque on west side of south porch at Hagia Sophia. Note the remains of a cross above it



59 (top left) Tile, Eşrefoğlu mosque at Beyşehir



60 (above) Khatchkar, Haghartsin, Armenia



61 (bottom left) Metalwork roundel, Khakhuli triptych, Georgia

Floral plaque on west side of the south porch at Hagia Sophia (Fig. 58).

Comparisons:

(Fig. 59): Seljuq inlay tile from the Eçrefoglu mosque, Beyşehir, 1297, now in the Karatay Müzesi at Konya.

(Fig. 60): Armenian carved roundel on the khatchkar outside the church of the Mother of God at Haghartsin, erected 1281.¹⁷

(Fig. 61): Georgian metalwork foliate roundel on the Khakhuli triptych. This was added to the icon in c. 1130, when it was enlarged and taken to the royal monastery of Gelati.¹⁸

Other comparisons include a Seljuq boss inside the Çifte Minare Medrese, Erzurum, c. 1250;¹⁹ Armenian designs above the west door to the church of the Mother of God at the monastery at Makaravank, 1204;²⁰ and an Armenian carved roundel on the east façade of the church of the Mother of God at Akhtala, c. 1210.²¹

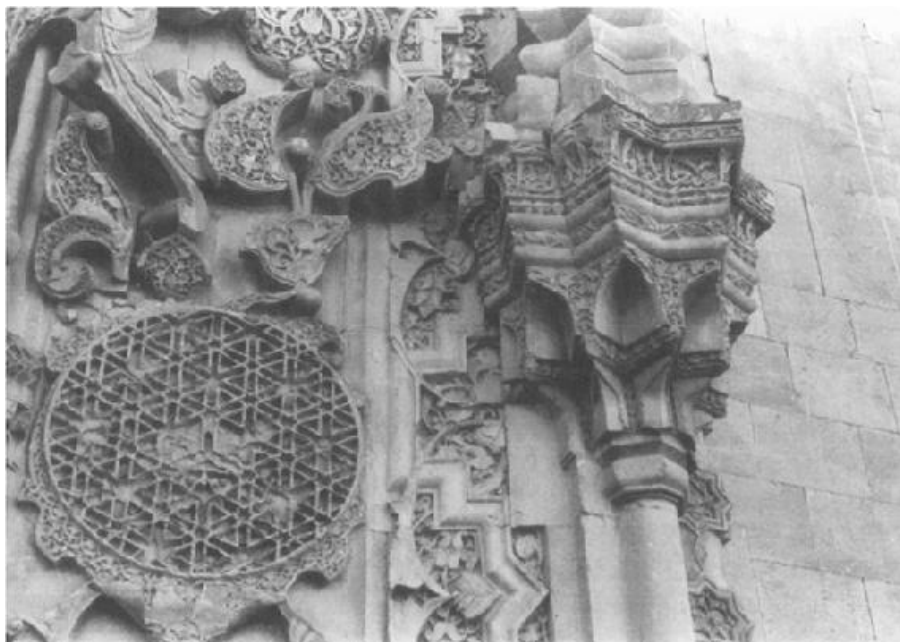


62 Central geometric design on the north porch at Hagia Sophia

Central geometric roundel on the north porch at Hagia Sophia (Fig. 62).

Comparison:

(Fig. 63): Seljuq carved roundel around door of the Ülü Camii, Divriği. This was built 1228/9 for the Mengujekid Ahmed Shah and his wife, Turan Melik.²²



63 Carved roundel, north door, Ülü Camii, Divriği.



64 Western geometric roundel on the north porch at Hagia Sophia

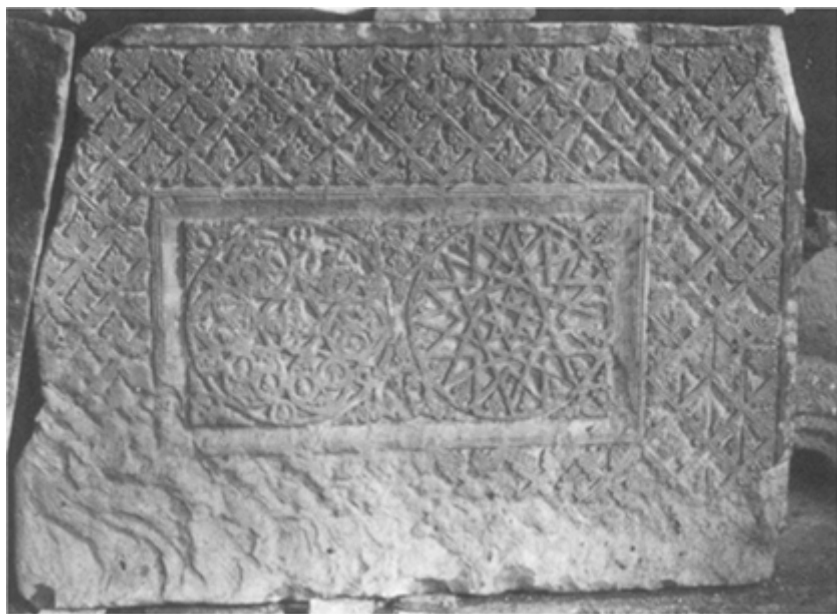
Western geometric roundel on the north porch at Hagia Sophia (Fig. 64).

Comparisons:

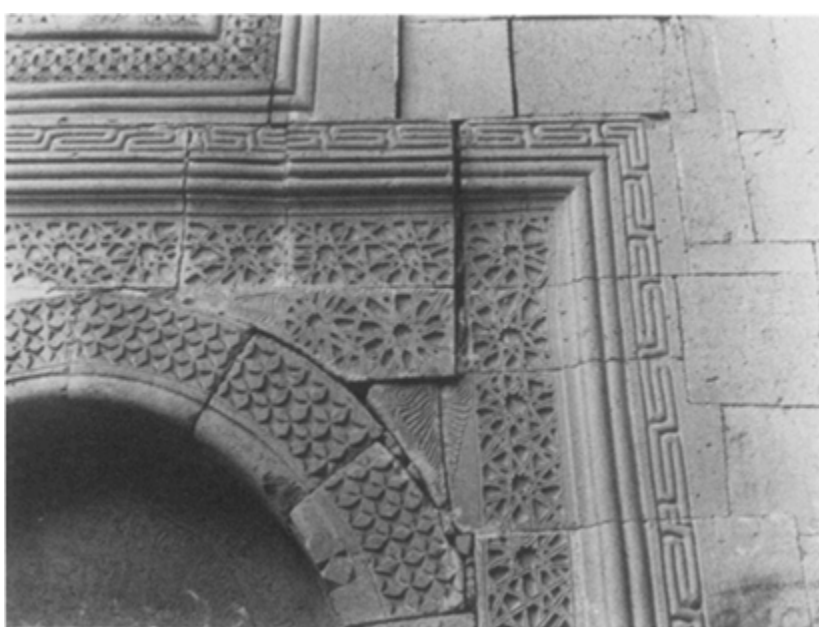
(Fig. 65): Georgian carved roundel on the chancel screen at Tqemlovani, mid-thirteenth century.²³

(Fig. 66): Georgian carved interlace on the west façade at Daba, near Borjomi. This church was built for a member of the Georgian royal court, c. 1333.²⁴

Other comparisons include the Armenian carved roundel on the east façade of the church of the Mother of God at Akhtala, c. 1210.²⁵



65 Carved roundel, chancel screen, Tqemlovani, Georgia



66 Carved interlace, west façade, Daba, Georgia



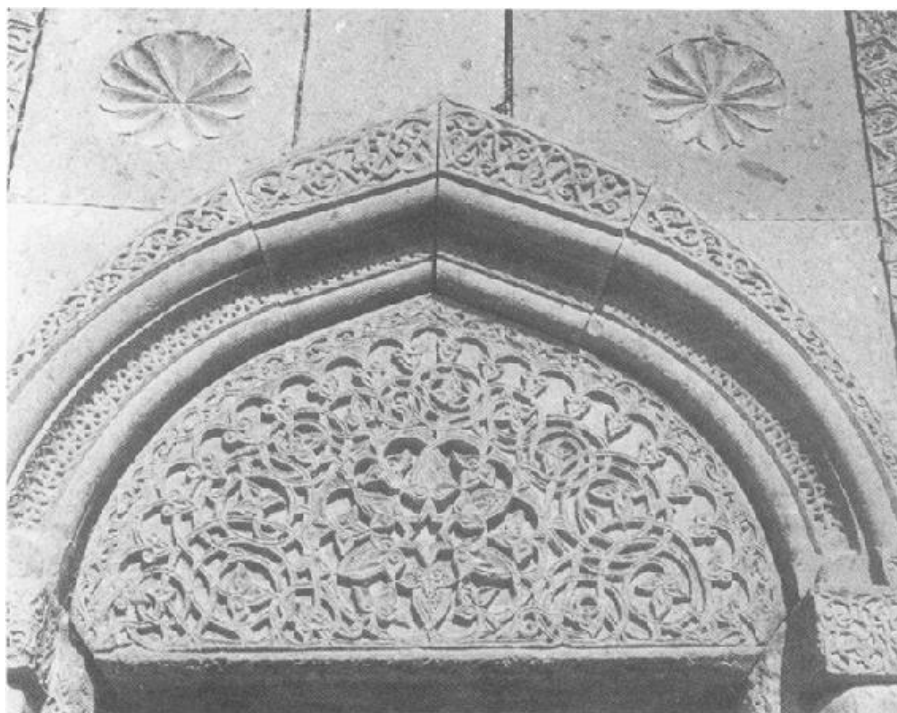
67 Lotus design on the west wall of the north porch of Hagia Sophia

Lotus design on west face of north porch (Fig. 67).

Comparisons:

(Fig. 68): Armenian interlace design above the west door of the church of the Illuminator at Goshavank (Nor Getik), 1237.²⁶

A similar lotus motif appears in a linear design along the carved base around the Ülü Camii, Divriği, built by 1228/9.²⁷



68 West door, church of the Illuminator at Goshavank (Nor Getik), Armenia



69 Muqarnas niche on the north side of the west porch of Hagia Sophia

Muqarnas niche on north side of west porch ([Fig. 69](#)).

Comparisons:

([Fig. 70](#)): Seljuq inlay muqarnas at the Sirçali Medrese, Konya, 1242.[28](#)

([Fig. 71](#)): Armenian muqarnas capital from the gavit of the church of the Holy Apostles at Ani, before 1217.[29](#)



70 Muqarnas, Sirçali Medrese, Konya



71 Muqarnas capital, church of the Holy Apostles, Ani, Armenia



72 Design over the arch on the west wall of the north porch at Hagia Sophia

Interlocking arch design on west face of north porch ([Fig. 72](#)).

Comparison:

([Fig. 73](#)): Seljuq design over entrance to Alaeddin mosque at Konya, completed 1220/21 by the Damascus architect Mohammed ibn Kaulun for Ala al-Din Kay Qubadh I.[30](#)



73 Main entrance, Alaeddin mosque, Konya. This façade incorporates many Byzantine elements to either side of this gateway

What emerges from this compilation is the ubiquity of this vocabulary of ornament. None of the comparisons can be used to identify specific sources or models for the designs at Hagia Sophia, or to demonstrate the cultural origins of any particular design or motif. Rather they show that a familiar range of ornamental work was being produced in an area that is spread widely geographically, culturally and chronologically. The designs appear throughout Anatolia and the Caucasus, from Konya in the west to Karabagh in the east, and from the full span of the thirteenth century. They appear in Seljuq, Turkoman, Georgian and Armenian architecture and in secular and religious buildings, both Christian and Muslim. Indeed it is possible to extend the comparisons further in both time and space, for example into medieval Azerbaijan,³¹ or later into the fourteenth century.³² This ubiquity discredits Tamara Talbot Rice's simplistic political interpretation, for if there is one it is debased through overexposure.

The prevalence of this ornament must also force us to re-evaluate Talbot Rice's description of the ornament as 'Seljuqid'. Although it may be possible to ascribe the ultimate origins of some of these motifs to Seljuq and Turkoman architecture, they appear too frequently in other contexts for such a specific, and specifically cultural, adjective to retain its meaning. It becomes paradoxical to speak of Seljuqid art on an Armenian or Georgian building; it certainly renders the terminology unstable and diminishes its meaning. It would perhaps be more accurate (and less prejudicial to further analysis) to use a

regional term such as ‘Anatolian’ instead of a culturally based one.³³ James Trilling has argued that interlace motifs had a common meaning as an apotropaic symbol across all Europe, but this does not account for the stylistic similarities among the motifs of the different religions and confessions in Eastern Anatolia.³⁴

The question remains of what impact the common use of this style must have on our understanding of Manuel’s empire. The evidence it provides of a common vocabulary of visual motifs in Anatolia suggests a degree of regional synthesis which would, at first sight, demand that we regard Trebizond as just another Anatolian culture. It is possible to understand more about how such a society would have functioned by looking at all the neighbouring societies that employed these motifs, and for which we have more documentary evidence. Political and cultural interchange existed at many levels. Behind the façade of almost constant warfare in eastern Anatolia (mostly, but by no means exclusively, between Christian and Muslim), there is evidence of enormous fluidity of people and ideas at all levels of society.

At the highest level of court élites, interchange was expedited and consolidated by intermarriage for diplomacy, treaties and alliances. In 1223, queen Rusudan of Georgia (1223–5), daughter of Tamar, had married the son of Mugith al-Din Tuğrilçah, emir of Erzurum (who converted to Christianity on his father’s orders),³⁵ and her daughter married Ghiyath al-Din Kay Khusraw II in 1236. After the defeat at Köseadağ, the mother, wife and daughter of Kay Khusraw II sought refuge with Hetum I in Armenian Cilicia, which had long had links to the Seljuqs.³⁶ And the marriage alliances of the Hetumid/Rubenids stretched even further south to the Crusader states, which subsequently had a great impact on their conception of power.³⁷ The Grand Komnenoi were fully involved in such diplomacy. One of Manuel I’s three marriages was to a Georgian princess, Rusudan, and two of his daughters also married Georgians, one of them king Demetre II.³⁸ Members of the dynasty also married into the Seljuq royal family.³⁹ At a slightly lower level at court, all chronicles make frequent reference to constant embassies between the Trapezuntines, Georgians, Armenians and Seljuqs, and in 1246 the rulers of all these peoples were compelled to travel to Karakorum for the *kuriltai* [great meeting] of the new khan, Güyük.⁴⁰

The results of this interchange can best be seen in the Mqargrdzeli family, which ruled in Armenia in the first half of the thirteenth century.⁴¹ Their court was perhaps the most mixed of all eastern Anatolia: they were Kurds who married into Armenian, Georgian and Seljuq families. They ruled a largely Armenian population, which they had liberated from nearly a century of Muslim rule in 1199, and they held titles at the Georgian court. In 1213 Ivane Mqargrdzeli even

introduced to Georgia the new title of *atabeg* ‘father and tutor to the king’, which was explicitly drawn from the Seljuq court.⁴² Court cases were heard jointly by judges drawn from the Georgian, Armenian and Muslim communities.⁴³ However, the most extraordinary example is that of Ivane Mqargrdzeli’s daughter, Tamta. Tamta was surrendered in marriage to the emir of Akhlat, Malik-al-Anhad Nejm-ad-Din after Ivane’s defeat in battle at Akhlat in 1210.⁴⁴ Nejm-ad-Din died before the marriage could be celebrated, and instead she married his successor, al-Malik al-Ashraq. She was able to retain her Christianity and after her husband’s death (and a period in captivity to Jalal ad-Din Khwarazmshah in 1230) she travelled to the court of the Great Khan, Hülegü, where she succeeded in having her sole control of the emirate of Akhlat confirmed. She was then able to continue to rule the emirate as a Christian, and used this position to secure privileged rights for Chalcedonian Christian pilgrims to the Holy Land.⁴⁵ Thus what started as a marriage to reflect an Islamic victory ended as a Christian one.

If Tamta represents the Christianisation of an Islamic emirate, then the reverse is true of Hasan Jalal al-Dawla, the contemporary Armenian prince of Artsakh (Karabagh). Despite his resolute adherence to Christianity and patronage of many monasteries, many of the outward manifestations of his rule were presented through Islamic customs and titles, most notably in his depiction on his principal foundation of Gandzasar.⁴⁶ In so doing he was repeating the tactics adopted by the Bagratid rulers of Georgia in the twelfth century. They had also adopted Muslim customs, attended Friday mosque and even promoted Sufi scholars in the decades after their recapture of Tbilisi when the emergent Christian economy still depended largely on Muslim merchants.⁴⁷

While it is difficult to estimate whether these contacts among social élites reflect a broader mixing of populations, there is evidence from trade of a much wider range of cultural interaction, which may have fostered the development of common culture⁴⁸. It was in the reign of Manuel I Grand Komnenos that trade routes began to use Trebizond consistently as their western goal as Mongol trade was re-routed to the north away from Ayyubid Syria. This not only enhanced the wealth and importance of the city (as is witnessed by the establishment of Venetian and Genoese trading colonies in the city by the 1280s) but also created the conditions for increased contact with other cultures.⁴⁹ We have proof of the ways in which the caravan routes of eastern Anatolia encouraged the transmission not only of goods but also of art and ideas. Michael Rogers has argued that the series of caravanserais, which were built in the thirteenth century along the river Araxes to the east of Igdir, were commissioned by the Mqargrdzelis to lure trade

to their capital, Ani.⁵⁰ The designs of these are almost identical in form and decoration to those built further west by the Seljuqs of Konya, demonstrating the cultural and economic alliance between the two. The coinage of Trebizond provides further evidence of this common market. By the reign of Manuel I, the sizes and specifications of Trapezuntine coins had broken away from the Byzantine standard and were re-weighted in line with those elsewhere in Anatolia and Persia, effectively producing a common currency, and Trapezuntine coin hoards have been found in Tabriz.⁵¹ Whilst the imagery remained Byzantine, the actual coin partook of a different cultural milieu.

We also have evidence of intellectual ties between the different cultures in the region. It is known that at the end of the thirteenth century, emperor Alexios II Grand Komnenos (1297–1330) was able to aid the scholar Gregory Chioniades to travel to Persia and gain entrance to the court of the Ilkhan who aided his study of astronomy.⁵²

Artistic patronage provides more concrete evidence of the syncretism of the cultures of Anatolia. This takes us beyond the demonstrable formal evidence that has already been outlined to lay bare the mechanics of interchange. This is most evident in the case of the Ülü Camii in Divriği (Fig. 74). In the 1220s, Divriği was a Mengüjekid emirate, allied principally to its related emirate in Erzincan to the west (which itself was largely an Armenian city), but also to Trebizond in its battles against the Rum Seljuqs.⁵³ The building of the Ülü Camii, which was financed by the local ruler Ahmed Shah and his wife, Turan Melik, was carried out by Khurremshah of Akhlat and the minbar was carved in 1240/41 by Ahmet, son of Ibrahim of Tbilisi, a city which by this time had been under Christian Bagratid rule for over a century.⁵⁴ Elements of its decoration have been linked to Georgia, as have motifs on the Çifte Minare Medrese in Erzurum of c. 1250 and that in Sivas of 1271.⁵⁵ Conversely, the stucco decoration in the (Christian) palaces of Dvin and Ani have been linked to sources in Muslim Konya.⁵⁶ The fluidity of motifs and the mobility of craftsmen was enormous.

It is certain that Trebizond engaged in many of the same commercial, political and cultural activities as its neighbours. This would seem to support the evidence of the ornament, and indicates that Trebizond was deeply imbued in its regional culture. However, this need not preclude Manuel's claim to the imperial throne. Rather, the ornament on the church provides evidence that Manuel had to balance his international and local goals. The link between the use of ornament and the expression of a political ideology is not clear cut. It is possible to look back to twelfth-century Constantinople and see a similar interest in the use of Muslim ornament at imperial and court

levels, but no-one sees this as a dilution of Byzantine ideals.⁵⁷ Manuel I Komnenos had added the Moukhroutas to the Great Palace in Constantinople. Nikolaos Mesantes described this as being ‘Persian’ in style, and having a stalactite ceiling.⁵⁸ This has been explained as being a special addition for the visit of Kilic Arslan in 1161, but it is reductive to conclude that a building with this form of decoration had to have a Muslim audience.⁵⁹ Other evidence of Islamic style decoration in Constantinople in the twelfth century suggests that this was more of a fashion than anything political.⁶⁰ It would also be possible to characterise the empire of Nicaea as an Anatolian power on very similar lines to those laid out above. There is abundant evidence of interchange between Nicaea and Rum. Nicaea traded often with the Seljuqs.⁶¹ Michael VIII Palaiologos served under Izz al-Din Kay Kawus II in the 1250s. In the 1260s, he formed an alliance with the Mongols, culminating in the marriage of his daughter, Maria, the Lady of the Mongols, to the Ilkhan Abaqa in 1265. The vogue for Islamic styles survived into Palaiologan Constantinople.⁶²



74 General view of the north door of the Ülü Camii, Divriği. 1228/9

Clearly Manuel saw no tension between the imperial ideal that he espoused and the Anatolian decoration of his church. This requires us to begin to formulate a new idea of what Byzantium represented in the thirteenth century. As the twelfth-century evidence shows, Byzantium was not a mono-cultural society. Its emperors had always used whatever visual devices were available to enhance their prestige,

and Manuel I Grand Komnenos can be seen to have been doing the same. He was prepared to adopt all available signifiers of wealth and prestige. It is perhaps best to see the ornament used at Hagia Sophia as symbolic of power only in the most general sense. It signified power through its associations with expense of craftsmanship and its deliberate display of luxury.⁶³ More important, it adhered to a vocabulary of conspicuous consumption that could be recognised and understood by all the audiences that would encounter it. To that extent, it does prove that Manuel's empire was rooted in regional affairs. To display his wealth through other means would have taken his display of power outside the realms that were normally to be expected, and so rendered it less comprehensible. This does not make it less Byzantine, however.

It is important here to think again about how the ideals of Byzantium and universal Christian power could be expressed in the thirteenth century. Instead of judging Manuel's empire against an abstract ideal of what Byzantium should be and finding it lacking (as most modern historians have), it is important to think how it would be most useful or possible for Manuel to express that power. Looked at in this way, Manuel's empire need not be seen as being subsumed by regional models of power. Rather it sought to incorporate them as evidence of the universality of his power. Byzantium now could only be expressed in different means.

It is therefore possible to discern something of the new model of empire that Manuel espoused. The remote location of Trebizond, and recognition of the *Realpolitik* of Anatolia, required that any reborn Byzantine empire that claimed universal jurisdiction (and so included all Anatolia once more) would have to rule a vastly more mixed population that it had in the eleventh century. And just as the Seljuq sultans took on Byzantine titles and forms to describe their power, so now the Trapezuntine rulers had to take on Muslim, Armenian and Georgian forms to express theirs.⁶⁴ Such a decision may have been forced on Manuel by the geopolitical position in which he found himself, and may have been as much an unconscious need to use the resources and experiences of the craftsmen that were available to him, but it nevertheless resulted in a compelling political vision.

The image of power, then, that emerges from the external decoration of Hagia Sophia is an 'inclusive' one, which sought to co-opt all alternative models that were available. It is one that in fact adds credence to the universal ideal embodied in the titles that Manuel proclaimed (even if they were rarely put into practice). What is interesting is that this ideal of Byzantine power was fundamentally at odds with the policies emerging from Nicaea at the same time. Under the Laskarids, the concept of Byzantine power was being

presented in an ever more rigid and reductive form, which promoted an identity through exclusion and force rather than inclusion. The rhetoric of Hellenism, the enforced conversion of Jews, and the massacre of outsiders, notably Armenians, produced a definition of Byzantine power that looked only inward to its ever-reducing resources and alienated potential allies. Nicaea may have been militarily more successful, but the political ideal it espoused was to have devastating consequences in the long term. It was this restrictive, exclusionary definition that was crowned in Constantinople in 1261. Such an empire was unable to look outwards or to present a broader appeal to the lands that it claimed to rule. A similar fate had befallen the Latin empire, which had also promoted an exclusive, rather than inclusive identity. In contrast, the testimony to the success of the newly evolving Trapezuntine policy was the longevity of the empire, which survived in a relatively stable state until 1461. Perhaps Constantinople could have survived longer if it too had adopted a similar strategy.

Chapter 6

Wall Paintings and Politics: rebuilding empire?

The previous chapters on the form and external decoration of Hagia Sophia have all centred on a similar issue. This is that the appearance of the church (if not always the messages that that appearance attempted to convey) seems to lie outside the mainstream of Byzantine art and culture. However, when we turn to the paintings in the interior of the church we seem to be faced with a paradox, which reinforces the alien nature of the exterior; for the wall paintings return us to a recognisably 'Byzantine' world, both in terms of the style of the paintings and their subject matter. To investigate the paintings of Hagia Sophia after an examination of the exterior sculpture in particular seems to be to move into a different world.

The murals are the sole surviving monumental paintings produced for a Byzantine imperial commission in the period of the Latin empire of Constantinople. Their importance as evidence of the development of Byzantine art in this period cannot, therefore, be underestimated. Moreover, the paintings allow us to gain a more detailed insight into the religious and political ideology of Manuel I and the empire of Trebizond, and of the visual promotion of imperial claims in the contested decades before 1282. Despite this, they have been subject to virtually no analysis since the restoration of the church by the Russell Trust over thirty years ago.¹

The arrangement of the wall paintings is very complex, and scenes are grouped in an elaborate series of programmes. The images sought

to convey a range of messages and can be interpreted on a number of different levels. It is possible to read political as well as theological and spiritual messages in this art. This chapter examines the possible political implications of the paintings. The following chapter concentrates on the relationship between the paintings and the liturgy, on questions about iconographie and programmatic innovation and on issues of date and the ideology of style.

Overview of the paintings

Despite the loss of much of the painting, particularly from the walls of the naos and the south porch, it is possible to determine the overall arrangement of the images in the church, and at first glance, the organisation of the wall paintings appears straightforward.² Groupings of narratives and cycles are apparent around the church, in addition to numerous images of individual saints and isolated scenes. The principal images in the naos are the monumental bust of Christ Pantokrator surrounded by a host of angels in the dome with Evangelists in the pendentives, and the Theotokos and Child between archangels in the apse. Around these focuses are a series of narratives: the Passion takes up the western half of the naos and post-resurrection scenes appear in the eastern part and the bema. The loss of the south wall of the naos means that all evidence of the images here is lost, but the arrangement of surviving images suggests that it contained the early life of Christ. The early lives of the Virgin and John the Baptist appear in the prothesis and diakonikon and in the bays of the naos preceding these. The narthex is dominated by images of the miracles of Christ; the west porch by the Last Judgement; and the north porch by the Tree of Jesse, Old Testament préfigurations of the Theotokos, and scenes from the lives of the Apostles. Almost nothing survives in the south porch. Only one lost painting has been recorded, the donor portrait of Manuel I Grand Komnenos, described by George Finlay and copied by prince Grigorii Gagarin, which is discussed in chapter eight.

However, within this overall structure there is a much greater complexity. A number of scenes are repeated in the church, notably four Christological scenes that accompany the portraits of the Evangelists in the pendentives. The Baptism of Christ, which appears by the image of St Mark, appears again in the narthex, and the Crucifixion and Anastasis, which accompany Sts Matthew and John respectively, on the north wall of the naos. Scenes from related cycles, such as those that concentrate on the apostles, are divided in different parts of the church, notably between the bema and north porch. A number of individual, isolated scenes appear to be located in

particular locations for specific reasons, but with little regard for the context of the other images around them, such as the images of the Baptism of Christ and Deesis on the east wall of the narthex. On either side of the apse and the door from the naos to the narthex were a series of monumental images of Christ and the Theotokos of which only fragments survive, but which must all have originally stood over three metres tall.

From this overview it is apparent that the church of Hagia Sophia does not contain one programme of wall paintings, but rather a series of programmes which interact both to divide and unify the various spaces of the church. To comprehend each programme and to build up an image of the church in its entirety, it is necessary to walk through the building observing, remembering and associating images. Meanings arise as the full range of images becomes visible. The arrangement of all the scenes also suggests that they were designed to be seen in the course of processions through the church – either entering the church after viewing one of the porches or narthex, or crossing the church from one porch to another.

Rebuilding Sion?

Many of the principal themes contained in the wall painting programme of Hagia Sophia are brought together in the core of the church, the area around the dome and apse. Three major painted inscriptions survive in these areas. One encircles the figure of Christ Pantokrator in the dome, one appears on the lower of the two ‘orders’ of the east arch beneath the dome, and the third survives in fragmented form around the top of the conch of the apse. These speak to both theological and political concerns and seem to provide the intellectual key to the interpretation of the paintings. A number of other monumental inscriptions were also included in the original wall painting scheme as can be seen in the few letters that survive in the west porch, but no other fragments survive in the main part of the church.³ These inscriptions have not been fully examined before.

The inscription around the conch of the apse is the easiest to interpret, since it places Hagia Sophia firmly at the heart of a Byzantine theological tradition. The inscription is now very fragmentary, and appears to consist of two separate elements, of which only the first can now be deciphered. This starts at the north side of the apse, and finishes at its apex:

...ΟΙΚΩ ΣΟΥ ΠΡΕ. Ι ΑΓΙΑ.....ΜΑΚ.....ΡΩΝ

[τῷ] οἰκῷ σου πρέ[πε]ι ἁγία[σμα κύριε εἰς] μακ[ρότητα ἡμε]ρῶν

Holiness will distinguish your house, O Lord, for ever and ever' (Psalm 92.5).

The second part of the inscription, on the south side of the conch, reveals only six legible letters, ...**COMEΘA**..., which cannot now be reconstructed, but which cannot form part of the same Psalm.⁴

The inscription encompasses the image of the Theotokos and Christ child in the conch of the apse and glorifies both mother and son (Fig. 75). This particular combination of text and image has many precedents in the Byzantine world and appears, for example, around the apse of Hosios Loukas.⁵ They evolved as part of the growing cult of the adoration of the Mother of God in the middle Byzantine period.⁶ At Hagia Sophia they are supplemented by the appearance of the Virgin between Joachim and Anna in the conch of the diakonikon apse, and by scenes of the early life of the Virgin (along with that of St John the Baptist) in the vaults of the diakonikon and prothesis and in the eastern vaults of the north and south aisles (nine scenes survive, but there must have been at least twelve originally) (Fig. 76). The iconography of these scenes has been analysed by Jacqueline Lafontaine-Dosogne, who has demonstrated how closely the images at Hagia Sophia adhere to the standard narrative and theological arrangement of these cycles.⁷

The image of the incarnation in the apse and the quotation from the Psalms around it provide a neat encapsulation of the eternal verities of Christianity. It places the theology and liturgy of Hagia Sophia in the mainstream of the Orthodox world. Although it is by no means unusual, it acts as a rallying point in a region surrounded by Muslim states, and a statement of Chalcedonian Orthodoxy in the rivalry with the Monophysite cultures of eastern Anatolia and Mesopotamia.



75 The Mother of God and Christ child and inscription in the conch of the main apse at Hagia Sophia

The two inscriptions in the area of the dome, however, present a more specific manifesto. As a combination they are unique in monumental decoration, and provide a more pointed and localised commentary, which can help to determine the theological and political symbolism of the church. Both the inscriptions were painted in clear majuscule letters, in black on white; the larger is more than 50cm high. They contain few ligatures or abbreviations, with exceptions that can be explained, have few errors and present no problems in reading. They are very easily legible from the ground, and were clearly determined so to be.

The longest inscription is that which surrounds the figure of Christ Pantokrator in the dome of the church. It is still well preserved, lacking only a few letters and begins and ends at the eastern most point, beneath Christ (Fig. 77). It was recorded and identified, but not discussed, by Talbot Rice.⁸

+ΚΥΡΙΟΣ ἘΞ ΟὐΡΑΝΟΥ ἘΠΙ ΤΗΝ ΓῆΝ ΕΠΕΒΛΕΨΕΝ ΤΟΥ ΑΚΟΥΣΑΙ
ΤὸΝ ΣΤΕΝΑΓΜΟ... ..Δ--ΕΝΩΝ, ΟΤΟΥ ΛΥΣΑΙ ΤΟΥΣ ΥΙΟΥΣ ΤΩΝ
ΤΕΘΑΝΑΤΩΜΕΜΩ... ..ΛΑΙ ΕΝ ΣΙΩΝ ΤΟ ΟΝΟΜΑ ΚΥ, Κ Τ ΑΙΝΕῚ ΑΥ
Ν ΙΑΗΜ.

+Κύριος ἔξ οὐρανοῦ ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν ἐπέβλεψεν τοῦ ἀκοῦσαι τὸν στεναγμὸν τῶν
πεπενθόντων τοῦ λύσαι τοὺς υἱοὺς τῶν τεθανατωμένων τοῦ ἀναγγεῖλαι ἐν Σιων
τὸ ὄνομα κυρίου καὶ τὴν αἰνεῖν αὐτοῦ ἐν Ἱερουσαλὴμ.

Out of the heaven did the Lord behold the earth, that he might hear the mournings of such as are in captivity and deliver the

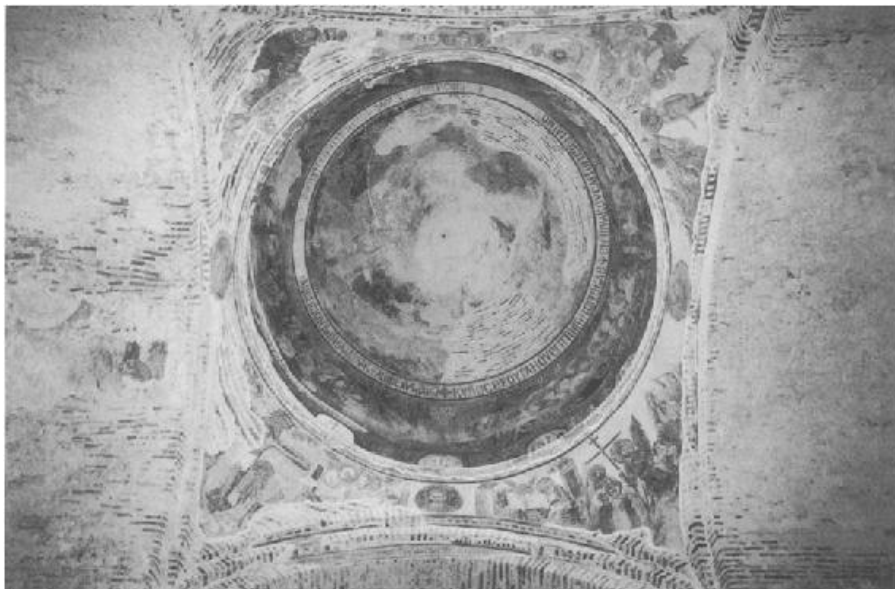
children appointed unto death that they may declare the name of the Lord in Sion and his worship in Ierusalem. (Psalm 101.20–22)



76 Diakonikon of Hagia Sophia. The image in the apse shows the

Mother of God and Christ child between Joachim and Anna; and the vault preceding it has the Prayer of St Anne, and Joachim and Anne bring Offerings

The only abbreviations appear in the final eighth of the inscription, at the same time as the letters begin to be crammed more and more closely together. As Talbot Rice and Winfield noted, the artists began in too leisurely a manner, and as they realised that they were running out of room they had to take radical steps in order to be able to fit in the whole of the required verses.⁹ Clarity seems to have been the principal requirement of the inscription, tempered by the need for completeness.



77 View into the dome of Hagia Sophia. The legibility of the inscription is apparent. The central image of Christ Pantokrator is now almost totally lost

The second inscription, on the face of the eastern arch below the dome is considerably shorter, and much more fragmentary. Only the second quarter of it now survives (on the north side of the arch), and that contains no abbreviations ([Fig. 78](#)).

...ΚΟΥ ΤΟΥΤΟΥ Ή ΕΣΧΑΤΟΙ ΥΠΕΡ ΤΗΝ ΠΡ...

διότι μεγάλη ἔσται ἡ δόξα τοῦ οἴκου τούτου ἢ ἐσχάτη ὑπὲρ τὴν πρώτην λέγει κύριος παντοκράτωρ

For the new glory of this temple shall surpass the old, saith the

The length of the arch suggests that the lost, second half of this inscription would have fitted in to the space available with no further abbreviations. Again, clarity seems to have been an important goal. The inscription would have been visible to anyone standing in the western part of the naos facing the apse.

The choice of texts for these monumental inscriptions was obviously a matter of some importance, especially given their prominence and clarity. They stand in contrast to the much smaller inscriptions that accompany the various scenes in the church that are painted in white often against a pale ground. The inscriptions also set the theological, liturgical and even political tone of the church. The sculptural decoration of the exterior of the church has already demonstrated the importance of inscriptions, through the two texts that accompany, describe and interpret the Genesis frieze on the south façade. These internal inscriptions play a corresponding role for the painted decoration.



78 Eastern arch below dome of Hagia Sophia. The central medallion of Christ Emmanuel is flanked by Sts Matthew and John, with the Crucifixion and Anastasis respectively. The inscription from Haggai is beneath. Sts Peter and Paul can be seen between the windows of the drum of the dome, and prophets are just visible in the embasures of the windows, with crosses in the soffits above

The choice and combination of these two inscriptions contrasts with the prevailing trend in inscriptions in Eastern Anatolia and the Caucasus in the thirteenth century.¹⁰ The evidence from these areas suggests that in the early thirteenth century a series of texts came to be used with some regularity in newly decorated churches. A complete cycle survives from the church of Timotesubani (c. 1220), near Borjomi in Kartli, generally thought to be the commission of the Georgian general Shalva Toreli-Akhaltsikheli, who has been linked with the expedition that captured Trebizond in 1204.¹¹ Timotesubani preserves all four of the monumental inscriptions that run around the arches beneath the dome of the church. Three of these are taken from the Psalms, and the fourth from Habbakuk. East: 'From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same the Lord's name is to be praised' (Psalm 113.3); north: 'The north and south thou hast created them' (Psalm 89.12); south: 'God came from the south, and the Holy One from Mount Taran' (Habbakuk 3.3); west: 'He appointed the moon for seasons: the sun knoweth his going down' (Psalm 104.19).¹² Examples of individual texts can be found in the closely allied monuments of Vardzia (1184—86), Qintsvisi (c. 1207),¹³ Bertubani (c. 1210),¹⁴ and Akhtala (1215),¹⁵ as well as elsewhere.¹⁶ These inscriptions all describe Christ's dominance of the cosmos and the limitless nature of his power. Each verse is obviously linked to the cardinal direction of the side of the church on which it is placed. Together they colour the images of Christ or the cross that appear near them, with their vision of the all-encompassing nature of his sacrifice.¹⁷

The choice of inscriptions at Trebizond cannot be fitted into any such straightforward pattern. They do not immediately relate to the imagery around them, and have no obvious theological significance in the same way that the apse inscription does. Neither can they be associated with the theological debates of this period between the Chalcedonian and Monophysite Churches. However, it is possible that they do have political significance. They are closely attuned to the contemporary situation of the empire of Trebizond. As was suggested in chapter four, the main inscription, with its emphasis on captivity and exile, echoes the political position of the Grand Komnenoi. It repeats the metaphor of exile and return that was seen in the Genesis frieze on the south porch. Theologically, the text prefigures the imagery of salvation through Christ that was depicted on the walls of the church, but politically it refers to the position of the emperors of Trebizond who had similarly been driven out of their birthright. The comparison between exile from Constantinople and the suffering of the Israelites at the time of the Exodus had already been made by Niketas Choniates and Theodore Laskaris.¹⁸ This inscription elevated

that comparison by commemorating it in monumental form. What was just a literary allusion in Nicaea has become in Trebizond a public statement of faith and an article of state doctrine.

The second inscription takes this one stage further. The verse from Haggai is more polemical in its appropriation of the Old Testament. It moves beyond the pain of exile, and looks forward to the return of glory. The text – ‘the new glory of this temple shall surpass the old’ – cannot but have had great resonance for anyone entering the church during the years of exile. It proclaimed the glory of God, but it also laid bare the ambition of the new church of Trebizond to supplant Constantinople and to become the new Sion and the new Jerusalem.¹⁹ If the Psalm quotation states the position of Grand Komnenoi, that from Haggai presents their manifesto for revival. This takes us to the core of the project of the Grand Komnenoi: to construct a new empire, a new temple of God, in exile. The empire of Trebizond is not merely a successor to the Israelites, the chosen people of God, but also of Constantinople, which itself had been cast as the new Sion over the previous nine hundred years. The inscription from Haggai also, however, exposes the ambivalence and paradox of building in exile. In order to convey the majesty of their claims the emperors required suitably imperial buildings, but the very fact of building in exile exposed the weakness of their position and implied recognition of the impossibility of returning to Constantinople.

The identification between Trebizond and the Israelites, and the proclamation that the new temple of Trebizond shall supplant the old established a number of points of comparison between Trebizond and the bible. The Genesis frieze on the south porch presented this to those entering the church, and the paintings inside continued to explore this relationship through visual analogies. There is possibly one further echo of the idea of the building of Sion in an image on the north wall of the narthex (Fig. 79). All that now survives of this image are fragments of a man and an angel, who are framed by a curved background. The man, who is unbearded and youthful, wears a cloak joined at the centre of his chest with a circular clasp, he wears a Phrygian cap and has his right arm raised. To his left hovers a small angel. Although no inscriptions survive, the composition is very close to a fresco of c. 1250 in the prothesis of the church of the Holy Apostles at Pec, which is identified as Daniel in the Lion’s den.²⁰ Although the image of the Lions’ Den is normally understood as a préfiguration of the resurrection, that does not fit the context of the narthex images at Hagia Sophia, which are otherwise primarily concerned with the Ministry of Christ. The anomalous presence of this one Old Testament scene is striking.²¹ It would be possible to read it as a eucharistie image in conjunction with the Feeding of the 5000

depicted above (based on the idea that Habakkuk visited Daniel in the Lions' Den to share bread with him),²² but it is also possible to see it as an allusion to Sion since the book of Daniel was interpreted in Christian exegesis as the announcement of the renewed Sion, and the coming of a permanent heavenly Jerusalem. This is certainly the interpretation given to the image at Pec, which along with the metropolitan church of Zica in Serbia was also called the new Sion.²³



79 Scene, here identified as Daniel in the Lions' Den, on north wall of narthex at Hagia Sophia. The main haloed figure wears a Phrygian cap and cape, and stands inside a grey arch (cave?); to his right is a small angel

In other images, the identification between Trebizond and heaven worked at a more personal level with the state embodied in the form of its emperor, Manuel. The donor image of Manuel compares him to David (see [chapter 8](#)), but it is possible that the paintings at Hagia Sophia attempted to exploit an identification between Manuel and Christ himself.

Two images of Christ Emmanuel appear in the church, in each case in a prominent location. One is at the centre of the arch around the main apse ([> Plate XIV](#)), the other on the east arch beneath the dome, immediately above the inscription from Haggai ([Fig. 78](#)). Both show a bust of Christ in a medallion, with a cross nimbus and simple robes. The images are almost identical. When facing the apse, the two images

appear one above the other –an unavoidable duplication. Christ Emmanuel also appears in a narrative context in a magnificent depiction of Christ disputing in the Temple in the south bay of the narthex (Fig. 80). In this, the Christ child, far larger than all the adult figures in the scene, sits enthroned among the doctors, his robes a shimmering mass of radiating light. This image is located above the image of the Baptism of Christ and Christ healing a blind man at the Pool of Siloam both of which were almost certainly located at this spot to accompany the act of baptism itself, which was normally celebrated in the narthex (Plate XXI).²⁴ In all three cases, the images of Christ Emmanuel are located at significant liturgical points in the church: by the apse, the centre of the naos and the baptismal font.



80 Christ disputing in the Temple on the east vault of the southern bay of the narthex at Hagia Sophia. This is one of the finest surviving scenes in the church; the chrysography on Christ's robes is very delicate

Christ Emmanuel had been celebrated by theologians as the perfect image of the dual nature of Christ, as well as of divine beauty and appears frequently in art.²⁵ The repetition of the images of Christ Emmanuel may also, then, have been chosen as a counter to Armenian Monophysitism, the major rival confession to Greek Orthodoxy in the region. Christ Emmanuel had also been especially venerated in the twelfth century by the emperor Manuel I Komnenos, who was

compared to the Emmanuel in panegyrics and who placed images of this type of Christ on his coins.²⁶ The attraction of the image to the emperor lay in the resonance of the name, and this added a layer of textual verisimilitude to the growing interest in Christomimesis in the late twelfth century²⁷. The emperor as Christ's vice-regent on earth was his mirror image in terms of both authority and appearance. Manuel of Trebizond may well have been playing on this textual pun too in so actively promoting this type of Christ. To place himself within this same stream of imperial deification would deliberately echo the earlier Komnenian practice, and so reiterate Manuel's claim to power.

The emphasis on ancestry is further accentuated by the figures that appear in the medallions that accompany the two images of Christ Emmanuel around the dome and apse. Around the base of the dome, there are three medallions over the north, west and south arches containing figures ([Fig. 77](#)), and on each side of the medallion of Christ Emmanuel on the arch around the main apse are a further three medallions ([Plate XIV](#); those on the north side are now lost). As with the figure of Daniel in the narthex, all wear cloaks with elaborate hems that are joined by broad circular clasps over the centres of their chests, small Phrygian caps on their heads, and they raise their hands in the orant pose. No inscriptions now survive to identify the remaining figures.²⁸

A number of possibilities exist for their identification. It is conceivable that they simply represent Old Testament prophets, but this is unlikely given that the seventeen surviving prophets in the drum of the dome and the depiction of David on the underside of the arch in front of the apse all wear different forms of robes. Alternatively, they may represent the Makkabees, who appear in similar dress in medallions on the west arch beneath the dome at Sopocani.²⁹ However, the numbers do not match those mentioned in the text, and none seem to be female.

The most probable identification is that they are the ancestors of Christ, as ancestors in similar dress and locations are found in a number of other monuments, including Monreale (c. 1180) and the Theotokos Peribleptos at Ohrid (1295).³⁰ The three medallions around the dome could even represent the Three Hebrews, who are numbered among the ancestors of Christ at the Kariye Camii.³¹ As we have seen, Hagia Sophia contains a number of repetitions of images, particularly around the dome and pendentives. The duplication of the Three Hebrews, especially alongside an image of Christ Emmanuel, would reinforce the Christological interpretation of the image.³²

The display of ancestors in the heart of the church suggests that this theme might have imperial connotations in addition to theological and

liturgical ones. As was shown in chapter one, the first Grand Komnenoi were concerned to demonstrate their ancestry and to trace their line back to the Komnenoi of Constantinople and the imperial purple. We know that this concern survived until the fall of Trebizond in 1461 in both art and literature. Jacob Fallmerayer, in the early nineteenth-century saw depictions of all the emperors of Trebizond from Alexios I to Alexios III (1349–90) on the west façade of St Eugenios.³³ Bessarion, in his encomium of the city of 1436/7, wrote that in the palace ‘all around, on the walls, is painted the choir of the emperors, both those who have ruled our land and their ancestors’.³⁴ The date of the palace paintings cannot now be determined, but given that much work was done on the palace by Andronikos I Gidon, it is possible that such a scheme could have originated in the thirteenth century. The multiple images of the ancestry of Christ at Hagia Sophia may, then, have been partially designed to establish a typology of ancestry and legitimacy for the Grand Komnenoi (who through their marriage alliances with the Bagratids of Georgia could also claim descent from the prophet David). The Tree of Jesse on the east wall of the north porch would have reinforced this (Figs 42 and 43). The Grand Komnenoi were not the only rivals to the Byzantine throne to use such devices. A Tree of Jesse, in which figures on the central trunk leading from Jesse to the Virgin all wear imperial dress, was added to the exterior of the Panagia Mavriotissa at Kastoria in the 1270s. It was located next to a portrait of Michael VIII Palaiologos and can be read as an encomium of imperial ancestry.³⁵ In Serbia the link was made more explicit, as trees of the Nemanjids at Gracanica, the King’s church at Studenica and the Bogorodica Ljeviska in Prizren developed alongside Trees of Jesse.³⁶

These are the most overt elements in the church to provide a biblically sanctified identity for Manuel Grand Komnenos, his church and even his empire. They provide, at the very least, oblique references to the position and political ambitions of the emperor of Trebizond, and they locate Manuel I within a known strand of political religious art. The existence of this strand also colours some other aspects of the church wall painting programme, where the theme was continued, expanded and expounded.

Rebuilding Constantinople?

Of the main narratives in the naos of the church, that of the Passion of Christ, which is located in the western part of the naos, fits in to a standard iconographie and programmatic pattern. It presents the narrative in some detail, and the number of scenes extends beyond the

normally restricted range of Feast scenes in most middle Byzantine churches to include episodes such as the Denial of St Peter. The cycle is organised so that the most important scenes, the Crucifixion and Anastasis, are placed on the north wall, opposite the main entrance to the church. They are therefore the first images that viewers would see on entering the church. This emphasis on the sacrifice of Christ and his triumph over death is perhaps additional slim evidence in favour of the identification of the church as the dynastic mausoleum of the Grand Komnenoi.

The cycle that follows the Passion in the church, that of the posthumous events of the life of Christ, is similarly extensive but contains a number of features which suggests that it was designed to play an even more important role in the church. The scenes in this cycle are concentrated in the eastern half of the church and the main apse, the church's principal liturgical focuses. Only a few scenes now remain intact, but it is apparent from them that they dominated the interior. They are singled out by their location, their scale, their visual flair and also by their subject matter and their emphasis on the apostles.



81 Drawing of the Ascension on the vault of the bema at Hagia Sophia

The cycle probably began on the north vault of the naos, where just a few fragmentary pieces of wall painting survive, but it culminates in two scenes, the Ascension on the vault over the bema ([Plates XI, XII](#); [Fig. 81](#)) and the Pentecost (now in a very fragmentary state) on the vault immediately preceding it, over the eastern part of the naos.³⁷ Both scenes were much the largest compositions in the church, and certainly overwhelmed those on the other main vaults. The Pentecost, for example, would have been four times the size of the paintings from

the Passion cycle on the west vault, which was divided in order to accommodate the Washing of Feet, the Last Supper ([Plate XV](#)), the Agony in the Garden and (probably) the Betrayal. This contrast in scale is further accentuated by the presence of a powerful central focus in each scene: the throne in the Pentecost, and the figure of Christ in the Ascension. The Ascension, which is visible throughout the church, presents a dynamic vision of the miracle, with the dominant, composed figure of Christ seated serenely with his right hand outstretched, while all around is a whirl of activity. Six angels sweep around his mandorla, and the twelve apostles and Theotokos look up from either side. The discordant poses, agitated gestures and the restless movement of the angels' wings and billowing robes never allow the eye to settle until it has reached the peak of the vault. Christ is the calm centre around which all else revolves. There can be no doubt as to the quality of this image and the skill of the artists who created it. The impact of this scene was such that within a few years it was copied (albeit on reduced scale) on the vault of the small Georgian church of St George at Achi in neighbouring Ajara.³⁸

The cycle of the posthumous events of the life of Christ continued beyond the vault scenes on to the walls of the bema. Three of the four scenes here survive, the Mission to the Apostles on the south wall (with a lost image below it; [Plate X](#)), and the Incredulity of Thomas and Christ's Appearance by the Lake of Tiberias on the north wall ([Plate IX](#)). The significance of these scenes is twofold. First, the scenes are marked out by their location: it is unusual to find apostolic narratives in the liturgical heart of the church, in contrast to the normal array of church fathers and liturgical images.³⁹ They illustrate the Pentikostarion,⁴⁰ and so fit in with the concern for Easter and its aftermath that was visible in the Genesis frieze and inscriptions on the south porch.



82 Drawing of the Incredulity of Thomas on the north wall of the bema at Hagia Sophia

Second, the composition of the scenes is unusual. They concentrate on the apostles rather than Christ. This is evident in both the scenes on the north wall of the bema, which depict Christ off-centre and replace him with apostles at the heart of the narrative. It is particularly noticeable in the Incredulity of Thomas (Fig. 82). The scene is by no means unusual in Byzantine art, but at Hagia Sophia the narrative is skewed with the biblical action concentrated in the western half of the composition. Here, Thomas reaches out to touch the wounds of Christ, while the eastern half of the image is given over to the reactions of the other apostles. The composition is certainly markedly different from the traditional symmetrical image that appears as part of the normal feast cycle, as in the contemporary image at Sopocani.⁴¹ The result of this arrangement is to place as much emphasis on the apostles and their reactions as on the core of the narrative itself.

The concentration on the apostles is even clearer in the other two surviving images, which are far less commonly seen in Byzantine art. Immediately below the scene of the Incredulity is Christ's Appearance by the Lake of Tiberias (Plate IX; Fig. 83). Occurrences elsewhere of this episode are sporadic and usually part of extended narrative cycles. At both Monreale and the Mirozskii monastery at Pskov it appears in a transept and in the monastery of St John the Theologian on Patmos, it is found in the refectory.⁴² To find the image in the bema at Hagia Sophia, then, is striking. The order of the elements in the scene is also distinctive. Reading from right to left it depicts four moments from the narrative: the apostles fishing, the apostles greeting

Christ, St Peter swimming to Christ (now indicated only by a fragment of Peter's halo at the feet of the apostles) and St Peter hauling in the net full of fish. This organisation of elements differs both from the biblical narrative and from the order seen at Monreale, Pskov and Patmos. Christ, once again, is off centre, and the prominence of the apostles is further emphasised by the inclusion of an additional vertical red border which effectively makes the reactions of the apostles in the boat a separate scene.



83 Drawing of Christ's Appearance by the Lake of Tiberias on the north wall of the bema at Hagia Sophia

This ordering of the iconography does, however, seem to have had a precedent in what must have been the most famous example of the image, that in the church of the Holy Apostles at Constantinople. This is now only known through the *ekphrasis* of Nikolaos Mesantes, written at the end of the twelfth century.⁴³ Mesarites's order for the narrative exactly mirrors the arrangement of the scene at Trebizond, particularly in his placing of Peter drawing in the miraculous draft of fishes last. Henry Maguire, comparing Mesantes's description only with the image at Pskov, assumed that the iconography of the scene at the Holy Apostles must have been identical to this surviving version, and so concluded that Mesantes's reading of the image was based largely on his own imagination.⁴⁴ The evidence of the version at Hagia Sophia indicates that it is possible that Mesarites's *ekphrasis* followed the image in the Holy Apostles more closely than has previously been thought.⁴⁵ More significant, the correspondence between the version at Hagia Sophia and Mesarites's *ekphrasis* might indicate a dependence of the former on the latter. This raises the possibility that Hagia Sophia looked back to the Holy Apostles with its distinctive iconography and compositions. This may have been done directly, through artists having seen the original before coming to

Trebizond, or indirectly, through intermediary texts such as Mesantes' s.

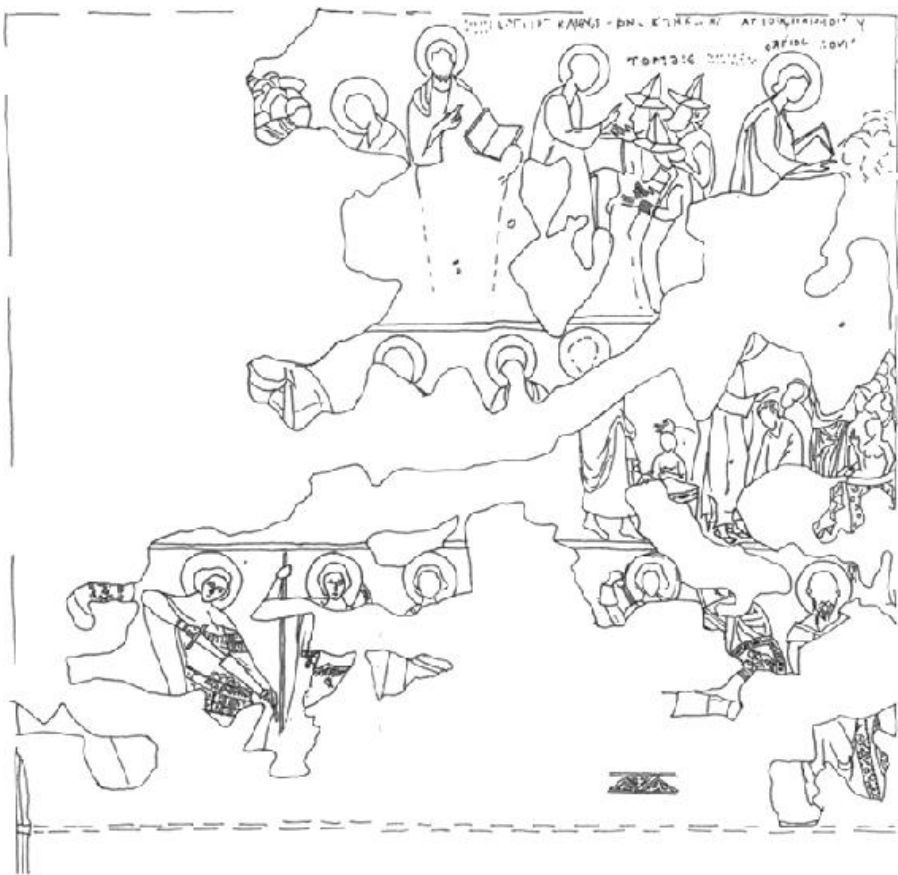
The emphasis on the apostles continues on the south wall of the apse with the Mission to the Apostles (Plate X, Fig. 84). This shows Christ in the centre with his arms outstretched over four men who bow down before him. That to the right of Christ can be identified as St Peter by his distinctive hair and beard. The general, symmetrical arrangement of this scene can be paralleled in a few other versions, notably a miniature of the scene in an early thirteenth-century Gospel manuscript in Berlin (Staatsbibliothek, MS gr. 4° 66, fol. 260v).⁴⁶ However, it differs from this and other contemporary monumental versions (such as those in the refectory at Patmos, and in the apse of the Georgian church of Timotesubani)⁴⁷ in one crucial respect. Although the lower part of the wall painting at Hagia Sophia is now lost, a fragment of the lower border survives at the edge of the scene, and this indicates that the scene only extended down by a further one metre, and so can never have included more figures than those now visible. It certainly can never have shown all twelve apostles. The image has more in common with manuscript images of the evangelists offering their gospels to Christ, such as the Gospels in the Biblioteca Marciana in Venice (MS gr. Z.540, fol. 12v),⁴⁸ and the Vani Gospels in Tbilisi (K Kekelidze Institute of Manuscripts, MS A-1335, fol. 8r).⁴⁹



84 Drawing of the Mission to the Apostles on the south wall of the bema at Hagia Sophia

Although the image of the Mission to the Apostles ends the cycle in the apse, it must be seen in conjunction with a larger group of images on the west wall of the north porch. Here, above a row of eight standing saints are two registers of images of the apostles (Plate XX; Fig. 85).⁵⁰ The upper register echoes the composition of the Mission to

the Apostles, with Christ in the centre and four disciples around him. Christ wears a red chiton and blue himation, he stands frontally and gestures to an open book in his left hand. On either side are four disciples (the southernmost is now lost), each of whom has a halo and raises his right hand in a gesture of blessing or preaching while holding an open book in his left hand. In this image, the disciples each face a small crowd, whose attire differentiates them from one another, suggesting that they represent different nations or cities. The only legible inscription accompanies the right hand figure, whom it names as **ὁ ἅγιος Λουκ[ας]** St Luke, suggesting that they represented the four evangelists. The lower register is in even more fragmentary condition but its iconography is apparent. It showed a further eight disciples baptising people in fonts. This is a continuation of the scenes of the apostles (here elided with the evangelists), depicting the results of the mission to the apostles: the evangelists preaching the word of God, and the apostles baptising the peoples of the world. This combination of the mission to the apostles and the baptising of the peoples is not unknown in the Byzantine world, but it is very rare.⁵¹ The most famous example was to be found in the Apostoleion, which Mesarites describes as showing the mission of the apostles to preach to all the peoples of the world.⁵² The only other known monumental image of the apostles baptising is that in the east cupola of the baptistery of San Marco in Venice, which was commissioned by doge Andrea Dandolo in the 1340s (and which has also been linked back to the Holy Apostles).⁵³



85 Drawing of the apostles converting and baptising the peoples of the world on the west wall of the north porch of Hagia Sophia

This suggests, then, that the emphasis on the apostles at Hagia Sophia could be ascribed to a desire to imitate the church of the Holy Apostles in Constantinople. This was one of the most important churches in the empire. Constantine the Great originally built it as his mausoleum, and in the sixth century Justinian rebuilt it with the same function. In addition to numerous relics of apostles, it held the tombs of the emperors of Byzantium from Constantine the Great to Constantine VIII in 1028. The symbolism of the building and its decoration was therefore of great importance to any future emperor as it carried within it an image of dynastic succession and legitimacy, and an association between secular power and scriptural authority.

The evidence for the design of San Marco in Venice in the eleventh century demonstrates that the Holy Apostles was seen as a potent model, worthy of imitation;⁵⁴ and the naming of the new metropolitan church of Serbia at Pec after the Holy Apostles demonstrates its

continuing allure in the thirteenth century.⁵⁵ Such a choice of model also makes sense in a Trapezuntine context. It demonstrated Manuel's desire to emulate Constantinople and to recreate aspects of the capital in exile. As an imperial statement, the emulation of aspects of the Holy Apostles, as at San Marco in Venice, demonstrated the imperial credentials that the new state wished to proclaim. The name, function and decoration of Hagia Sophia were perhaps designed to echo and fuse aspects of the two most important churches in the capital. As the Panagia Chrysokephalos took on the coronation function of the Constantinopolitan Hagia Sophia, so the Trapezuntine Hagia Sophia looked to the Holy Apostles as the obvious model for an imperial mausoleum. The *ekphrasis* of Mesantes serves to demonstrate the importance and allure of the Holy Apostles on the eve of the Fourth Crusade. Unlike San Marco, of course, Hagia Sophia did not follow the architectural layout of Justinian's building, but as was demonstrated by Richard Krautheimer in 1942, the requirements of a copy are as much symbolic as actual.⁵⁶ Indeed, as a mausoleum church, Hagia Sophia could also look to a number of other, more recent and more pertinent models in Constantinople, such as Alexios I Komnenos's Orphanotropheion or John II Komnenos's Pantokrator monastery. The need for splendid burial sites as indicators of imperial power in this period can be seen by charting the spate of such buildings that appeared in the mid-thirteenth century: the monastery of Christ Saviour (Sosandra) on Mt. Sipylos near Magnesia for John III Vatatzes of Nicaea in 1224; Sopocani for Stefan Uros I in Serbia in the 1250s;⁵⁷ and the redecoration of the south-east chapel at Gelati in Georgia for Davit VI Narin in the 1280s/90s.⁵⁸

The interest in apostles can be seen to have had other imperial associations as well. Trebizond, like Constantinople, could claim to have been converted by the apostle Andrew.⁵⁹ Constantine the Great had been called the thirteenth apostle, a link made explicit by the location of the tombs in the Holy Apostles. This typology was revived under the Komnenoi, and Anna Komnena named her father as the thirteenth apostle in the *Alexiad*.⁶⁰ This again suggests the possible importance of literary sources for the ideas enshrined in the art of Trebizond. Finally, apostles may have had contemporary resonance for Manuel I Grand Komnenos. His interest in depicting them preaching, converting and baptising may have reflected the missionary zeal of Trebizond. These images take up a great deal of space in the north porch, and are located in an area of the church to which there was easy access to those not yet permitted into the church itself. It is possible to read in them a public statement of the Christian commitment and evangelising aims of the empire. Throughout Anatolia in the thirteenth century there was a growing concern with

theological matters, Orthodoxy and the promotion of religion. Georgia and Armenia had had intermittent councils to discuss union during the twelfth century, but in the thirteenth these took on a new importance as much of northern Armenia came under Georgian control. A number of councils were held, the most important being that at Sis in c. 1210.⁶¹ Cilician Armenia was involved in negotiation with Rome for a union of churches, and hopes in the thirteenth century were also high for the conversion of the Mongols, an area in which the Cilician Armenians and Franciscans were particularly involved.⁶² And no doubt, there were more idealistic desires to convert the Seljuqs too. If Trebizond was to establish itself as the leader of Christianity in the region (if not throughout the Christian world as it no doubt hoped) then it had to be seen to be in the vanguard of such a movement.

The wall paintings also established Manuel's faith in contrast to that of the emperors of Nicaea. Extensive theological debates were carried out between Nicaea and Rome throughout this period, culminating in the Treaty of Lyons in 1274 between Michael VIII and Pope Gregory X. These unpopular negotiations allowed rivals to Nicaea to present themselves as the true defenders of Orthodoxy. In this light the emphasis on apostles promoted the vision of the empire as the natural successors of the apostles, as active promoters of Christianity among the heretics and non-believers; as defenders of Orthodoxy.

The concern to display Orthodoxy in the wall paintings of Hagia Sophia can be found in other images in the church. At the centre of the south wall of the north porch, next to the images of the apostles on the west wall, is a small section of an image showing an angel sitting at a table on which sits a bowl. Although most of the image is lost, it can be identified as the Hospitality of Abraham, in which the two other angels, Abraham and Sarah would have appeared to the left of the surviving fragment. The scene cannot form part of the Marian cycle of Old Testament prototypes on the north wall (which were discussed in chapter four) as it is not a recognised exemplar for the Virgin. However, the three angels that visited Abraham and Sarah were seen as types for the Trinity, and they may have been included here as part of a display of Trinitarian doctrine.

Self-promotion

The one other area where we might expect to find images relating to Manuel and the display of power is in the south porch, although this is the part of the church to have suffered the greatest loss. The array of sculpture on the exterior marked this entrance out as the principal

way in to the church, and the eagle on the keystone of the arch gave the building an imperial stamp. Only two fragments of original painting now survive on the vault of the porch and it is likely that these would have heralded the themes that lie within. Neither fragment can be positively identified, but it remains possible to provide a tentative proposal for one. This is a small fragment on the east side of the vault, which preserves a small corner of one image showing an army of soldiers wearing pointed helmets and all carrying spears except for one man (who may be on horseback) who holds a sword aloft in his left hand. The helmets worn by the soldiers are reminiscent of contemporary Seljuq military dress. Such an image cannot be from the New Testament, where no large gatherings of soldiers are mentioned and so does not seem to be directly connected with the scene on the other side of the vault, which contains an unidentifiable haloed figure. This indicates that the south porch, like the north porch, contained a number of separate iconographic cycles, a further indication of the complexity of the painted programme.

The two most probable identifications for this image, then, are either a scene from the Old Testament, or an image recording an event from contemporary history. Numerous illustrations of armies and wars appear in manuscripts of the Octateuch, and this might derive from any of them.⁶³ Monumental images from the historical books of the Old Testament are, however, rare in this period. The decoration of the north porch would suggest that any Old Testament image in the south porch was intended to be seen as a *préfiguration* for a New Testament event, but the limited evidence means that this line cannot be further explored.

The other possibility is more tantalising. This is that the image may come from a scene depicting part of the history of the empire of Trebizond, presumably a victory of Manuel, who was later to be remembered by Panaretos as ‘expert general’.⁶⁴ Numerous references to monumental images of imperial victories being erected throughout Byzantine history survive in documentary sources,⁶⁵ and significantly some refer to such images being placed in ecclesiastical locations. In the 1170s, the *pansebastos* George Palaiologos set up images of the victories of Manuel I Komnenos in the *pronaos* (narthex?) of a monastery dedicated to the Theotokos in Constantinople.⁶⁶ And early in the fourteenth century, a poem of Manuel Philes records that Michael Glabas Tarchaneiotes set up paintings of his military exploits in the monastery of the Theotokos Pammakaristos (Fethiye Camii) in Constantinople.⁶⁷ The display of imperial victories was an important element in the promotion of imperial power and splendour, and Michael VIII Palaiologos was to set images of his victory over the Angevins at Berat in 1281 in the vestibule of the Blachernae Palace.⁶⁸

The tradition of presenting the emperor with a *peplos* embroidered with scenes of his activities and exploits in the past year was also revived by Michael VIII.⁶⁹ Bessarion records that beside the portraits of emperors in the palace of Trebizond were also images of ‘the dangers our city has undergone and those who in attacking it have done so to their own detriment’.⁷⁰

The existence of a scene of imperial triumph would fit in with imperial message of the church, proclaiming both the Orthodoxy of the Trapezuntine dynasty and also the divine support for its rule as evidenced in their victories. The south porch is certainly the most appropriate location for such an image.

Chapter 7

Hagia Sophia: art, the liturgy and modernity

The inscriptions in Hagia Sophia and the prominence of apostles and evangelists, which were examined in the previous chapter, are the elements in the decorative programme that are most capable of holding up overt political messages. The possible allusions to the church of the Holy Apostles in Constantinople suggest Manuel's desire to echo the imperial city in his new capital, and to demonstrate his knowledge of it, even if only through intermediary texts. However, this aspect of the decoration of the church forms only one reading of one part of the overall programme. Other areas of the painted interior display a variety of unusual and interesting features, which can also shed light on the cultural orientation of Trebizond in the thirteenth century. The arrangement of the images, their relationship to the liturgy and their use of space demonstrate the access and knowledge that the designers and painters of Hagia Sophia had to up-to-date theological and artistic ideas, their willingness to innovate, and their impact on later developments in Byzantine art. These all provide further evidence of the relationship between Trebizond and the rest of the Orthodox world in this period. The analysis relies both on iconographie and on stylistic comparisons, which investigate the skills and techniques of the artists involved as well as the devices they employed to convey ideas in the images, whether through their use of narrative, composition, incidental detail or the depiction of the human figure.

As the only imperial commission to survive between 1204 and 1261 the paintings have been heralded as the ‘missing link’ in thirteenth-century art, and it is often assumed that the artists that worked at the church must have been trained at the heart of the empire, possibly even Constantinople.¹ This chapter explores both the degree to which Trebizond can be located as an emergence from twelfth-century Byzantium, and also the extent to which its innovations had an impact on the fourteenth century: do the paintings at Hagia Sophia do fit in to the mainstream of Byzantine art? At the same time, the paintings can be placed in their regional and broader international context by comparing them with those being made at the same time elsewhere in the Orthodox world, in other regions of the Byzantine world including Cappadocia, in Georgia and Armenia, and in Serbia and Bulgaria. Both forms of investigation enable us to see the degree to which Trebizond was a separate regional development, and the degree to which it fits in with its neighbouring Christian cultures.

Art and liturgy at Hagia Sophia

The heart of the liturgy took place in the apse of the church. However, any discussion of the relationship between art and liturgy at Hagia Sophia is hampered by the loss of the paintings in this area. The principal surviving feature, the depiction of the Mother of God and Christ child in the main conch ([Plate XIII](#); [Fig. 75](#)), conforms to the standard arrangement in the Byzantine world, and provides no clues as to what lay in the register below.² The absence of any traces of painting in the lower zones mean that it is impossible to make any judgement about what was depicted there. Around the margins of the apse five church fathers survive, St Epiphanius of Cyprus in the embrasure of the north window, and Sts Eleutherios, Gregory of Agrigento, Basil and Athanasios on the vault of the passage between the main apse and the prothesis. They comprise an eclectic selection, but provide no indication of what they once framed. The only hint of the inclusion of recent artistic innovations comes in a fragment of painting in a small niche in the north wall of the prothesis. All that now survives is part of the head of Christ, which was identified by Talbot Rice as an image of Christ as the Man of Sorrows. The underside of the arch of the niche includes two crosses with the inscriptions IC XC NI [KA] and Φ Χ Φ Π ([φῶς Χριστοῦ φαίνει πᾶσι](#)). The iconography of the Man of Sorrows, which had only developed in Byzantium in the twelfth century, provides one indication of the city’s appreciation of recent artistic and liturgical innovations.³

There are, however, images elsewhere in the church that allow us to explore in greater depth the theological complexity of the decorative programme and its relationship to the liturgy. A number of areas have already been noted in this regard in earlier chapters. The interest in préfigurations of the Virgin which appear in the north porch, presages monumental examples such as those at the Theotokos Peribleptos (Sv. Kliment) in Ohrid of 1295, and in the monastery of Christ in Chora (Kariye Camii) of 1315–21.⁴ The range of préfigurations at Hagia Sophia is more restricted than in either of those later churches, but it is unusual in its inclusion of the Tree of Jesse as part of this programme.⁵ The strongest liturgical links in the church seem to be associated with Easter. The exterior sculpture, discussed in chapter four, demonstrates how all areas of the church, both interior and exterior, were exploited during the course of church services, and its inscriptions relate to the opening of Lent. The choice of apostle images in the apse also has Easter associations. The Mission to the Apostles and Incredulity of Thomas are linked to the liturgy of the Sunday after Easter. These indicate that the decoration of the church was designed to have most impact at Easter, the most important festival in the Orthodox year.⁶

Inside the naos, the most striking new use of imagery appears in the unusual combinations of figures and scenes in the pendentives below the dome of the naos. These provide the locations for some of the most complex iconography in the church. Each pendentive contains an image of an evangelist, his symbol and a Christological scene; they are divided by bust medallions at the summit of each vault.⁷ The north-west pendentive shows St Luke, the ox and the Nativity; the south-west: St Mark, the eagle and the Baptism; the north-east: St Matthew, the angel, and the Crucifixion; the south-east: St John, the lion and the Anastasis ([Plates V-VIII](#)).⁸

This is the only example in monumental art of evangelists being combined with scenes from the life of Christ. Given that the Christological scenes here are repeated elsewhere in the church, it is clear that the pendentive images were designed to be seen independently. The Crucifixion and Anastasis appear again on the north wall, where they form part of the extensive passion narrative that runs around the walls and vaults of the naos. The Baptism appears again on the east wall of the south compartment of the narthex, and it seems to have had a specific liturgical function, linked to the baptism of catechumens. There is no second image of the Nativity, but this is probably explained by the loss of so much of the painting in the south half of the naos, which has resulted in no scenes of the early life of Christ surviving.

The pendentive scenes were clearly designed to be seen as a

separate group in conjunction with the evangelists next to them. This arrangement has parallels in Byzantine manuscript painting. A series of sixteen manuscripts of the Gospels from the Komnenian period pairs author portraits of the evangelists with scenes from the life of Christ.⁹ Examples include Marciana gr. Z.540 and the Vani Gospels (Tbilisi, K. Kekelidze Institute of Manuscripts, A-1335), which was copied by the scribe Ioane in Constantinople for queen Tamar of Georgia in c. 1200, and was therefore current liturgical practice in Georgia at the time of the creation of the empire of Trebizond.¹⁰ Cecilia Meredith's study of this group of manuscripts has shown how their images can be linked to the liturgy: the miniatures were chosen in accordance with the principal text read from each Gospel on particular feast days. It is therefore possible that the images at Hagia Sophia were also designed in association with readings during the liturgy. At Hagia Sophia, three of the pairings follow the standard arrangement, and all are linked to the major feasts which the imperial court attended. The fourth pairing, that of Matthew and the Crucifixion, does not appear in any of the manuscript examples, but it may also be explained by association with imperial ceremonial. J. Myslevic has suggested that it was determined by the reading from Matthew on the Crucifixion at the **Βασιλικαὶ ὥραι** on Good Friday.¹¹ This arrangement would therefore echo the Genesis frieze on the exterior of the church, which, as we have seen, was also designed to be viewed or even re-enacted during the Lenten liturgy. We know from a fourteenth-century manuscript obit that the church featured in imperial processions at Easter.¹² This explanation must remain tentative, as it is still difficult to establish the nature of the correlation between these images and the liturgy in the church, as this is a remarkably inflexible system for monumental paintings which are, of course, always visible. Nevertheless, it does suggest a link between decoration and the Easter liturgy. It certainly indicates the potential complexity of the decoration in the church.

The evangelists and their gospels occur in one other painting at Hagia Sophia. This is the central vault of the narthex, the most spectacular surviving painting in the church. Here the four evangelist symbols, each holding a jewel-encrusted codex of the gospel, surround the hand of God, which emerges from a burst of greyish light ([Plate XVI](#)). This light then descends down the four groins of the vault in multi-coloured bands that envelop the viewer standing beneath them. The tapering of the bands towards the centre produces a perspective effect that raises the hand of God ever higher into the heavens. Between the four bands appear tetramorphs (in the north and south compartments), seraphim and thrones (in the east and west compartments). The only textual aid in the vault is the single

appearance of the word **ΑΓΙΟΣ** in the south compartment. Through its design and enveloping nature, the vault is truly overwhelming.

This form of vault design is similar to those seen around the apses of the great Norman cathedrals of Sicily. Both Cefalù and Monreale have four seraphim or cherubim in the compartments of groin vaults, accompanied by inscriptions reading **ΑΓΙΟΣ ΑΓΙΟΣ ΑΓΙΟΣ**.¹³ These Sicilian vault mosaics demonstrate the glory of worship deserving to God. The multi-coloured bands at Hagia Sophia are perhaps an attempt to match in paint the light-reflecting qualities of mosaic, although they also show the influence of the decoration of canon tables in contemporary Armenian manuscripts (for example, the Hromkla Gospels of 1253; Washington, Freer Gallery of Art, MS 44.17).¹⁴ However, the combination of evangelist symbols and angels in the narthex image at Hagia Sophia indicates that it is more complex than this standard image of the worship of God. As with the evangelists in the pendentives, the closest parallels for this imagery are to be found in late Komnenian Gospel manuscripts. Marciana gr. Z.540 has as part of its prologue an image of the *Maiestas domini*, Christ Emmanuel surrounded by the four evangelist symbols (fol. 11v; [Fig. 86](#)), where it is followed by the image of Christ's Mission to the evangelists (fol. 12v).¹⁵ The detailed iconography of the manuscript images is different from that in the images at Hagia Sophia, but the manuscripts suggest one way of reading the wall paintings. The images in the manuscripts present, as a prologue, the introduction of the word of God and its sending out into the world, and this is then fleshed out in the events of the Gospels which follow. At Hagia Sophia a similar structure is visible. In the narthex, which is a preparatory chamber to the church, viewers see the Logos, the word of God, being introduced into the world through the Gospels, and as they move into the naos they then see the incarnate Logos, Christ. The echo of Armenian canon table decoration reinforces the prefatory nature of the image.

This way of viewing the narthex vault as a prologue to the decoration of the naos once again stresses the processional nature of the imagery. It is striking how both manuscripts and wall paintings both share the same revelatory structure in which one set of images lead on to the next. The manuscript comparisons cannot in themselves explain the wall paintings, but they do provide a framework within which to read them. This reading of the narthex vault paintings suggests that the narthex was used for the traditional role of a place of instruction and preparation before entering the main body of the church, where Christian revelation was most fully expressed. The vault painting also served as a link between the narthex and the paintings of the Last Judgement in the west porch ([Fig. 18](#)). The

imagery of the evangelist symbols and tetramorphs was drawn from the books of Ezekiel and Revelations, which also provided the main source for visions of the Last Judgement.



86 Christ Emmanuel, evangelist symbols, Isaiah and Ezekiel in a twelfth-century Byzantine Gospel book (Venice, Biblioteca Marciana, MS gr. Z.540, fol. llv)



87 The Deesis on the east wall of the north bay of the narthex at Hagia Sophia

The narthex vault painting forms part of the most complete set of paintings to survive in the church. The majority of scenes on the other walls and vaults of the narthex are taken from the ministry of Christ, of which now ten scenes remain. This iconographie layout establishes the pattern that is seen at the Kariye Camii, where the ministry cycle is located in the outer narthex. The scenes at Hagia Sophia do not appear in biblical order and it is impossible to discern any reason for this. They are also interspersed with other, unrelated scenes, including some, possibly, from the Old Testament.¹⁶ The walls on either side of the entrance into the naos have the largest scenes in the narthex, to the south is the Baptism of Christ ([Plate XXI](#)) and to the north the Deesis ([Fig. 87](#)). Both were clearly the focus of particular veneration: the Baptism image was related to the site of baptism in the church, and the Deesis was an image of intercession suitable for an area of the church housing catechumens. In the tympanum above the door into the naos was an image of Christ, surrounded by the Annunciation ([Plate XVII](#); [Fig. 88](#)). Beneath this on either side of the door were images of Christ Philanthropos and the Virgin. Opposite over the entrance to the west porch was the Mandylion. Of the ministry scenes, one stands out. This is the Multiplication of the Loaves (Feeding of the 5,000), which is an unusually large scene. It takes up the equivalent space of four scenes elsewhere in the narthex. Starting on the east wall of the narthex, above the Deesis, it rises to the top of the vault, and

then continues across the full width of the north wall of the narthex (Plate XVIII; Figs 89 and 90). It is a lively, detailed image. The size of the painting suggests that it had an especial prominence in the cycle. The most obvious reason to be interested in such a scene would be for its eucharistie interpretation. At the Kariye Camii it is also given great prominence, being in the vault over the main door of the outer narthex; but there it is combined with the image of the Marriage Feast at Cana, which provides the eucharistie counterpoint of the wine.¹⁷ At Hagia Sophia, the Marriage Feast at Cana is located at the south end of the narthex on the opposite side of the vault (Plate XIX; Fig. 91); it is difficult to extend a similar eucharistie interpretation here. However, interest in this event reflects the *Alexiad*, where Anna Komnena compares her father's generosity in founding the Orphanotropheion to Christ's feeding of the five thousand.¹⁸ It is perhaps further evidence of the importance of texts as the basis for Trapezuntine views of Constantinople. The idea of recreating the past was certainly something that Michael VIII Palaiologos was to take up, but in a more literal way, when he re-founded the Orphanotropheion after 1261.¹⁹

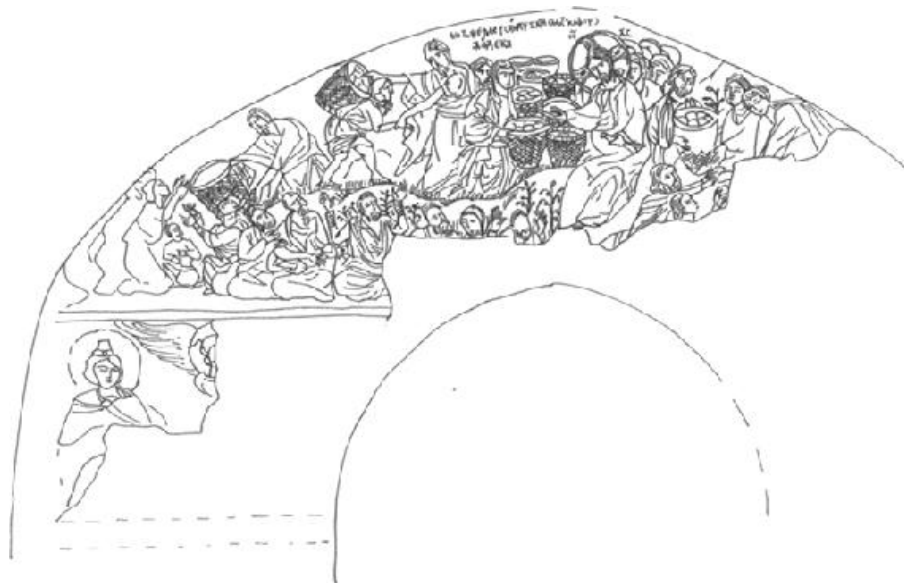


88 Door from Narthex into naos at Hagia Sophia. On either side of the door are the Mother of God and Christ Philanthropos; above was an image of Christ between angels (now largely lost), and around this is the Annunciation. The east side of the Apocalypse Vault envelopes the whole bay

This discussion has examined only a few of the aspects of the paintings of Hagia Sophia. What emerges from it is the level of complexity contained in the decorative programme. The layout of the various programmes, the selected repetition of images and the associations between cycles in different areas of the church all demonstrate the elaborate theology being given visual form throughout the building. Detailed analysis is hampered as ever by the lack of texts from Trebizond that could expound upon the theological and political ideas that are hinted at in the images. The fact that the best available parallels to the imagery come from manuscripts indicates the importance of written sources and manuscript illuminations to the design of Hagia Sophia, and suggests that the Grand Komnenoi's idea of Byzantium came entirely at second hand.



89 The Multiplication of the Loaves and Fishes on the east vault of the north bay of the narthex at Hagia Sophia. This is the first half of the depiction of this scene, which continues on the north wall of the narthex, to the left of this image



90 Schema of the Multiplication of the Loaves and Fishes on the north wall of the narthex at Hagia Sophia. This shows the completion of the miracle, when the twelve baskets are collected by the apostles. Note also the location of the image of Daniel in the Lions' Den below

Analysis is also hampered by the lack of churches with a comparable range of iconography. No contemporary church contains the form or range of the images seen at Trebizond. Only Sopocani in Serbia can approach Hagia Sophia for the sophistication of its overall programme, but here the arrangement of images is much more compact. As a result, it is difficult to give the images at Hagia Sophia a more secure or coherent visual context. Nevertheless, it is clear that it is impossible to dismiss the empire in intellectual terms. The paintings show that Trebizond was capable of making considerable additions to the language of art and to the interaction between art and the liturgical space of the church in this period. What is interesting is the way that some ideas and interests, such as the préfigurations of the Virgin are continued in later monumental art, but others, such as the interest in the evangelists are not. Under Manuel I Grand Komnenos, it seems that Trebizond was already an active intellectual centre, which was able to forge new directions, but that few of these were followed up outside the empire. Trebizond presents us with the first hints of a new direction in Byzantine art, but one that political developments were to consign to oblivion.



91 The Marriage Feast at Cana on the west vault of the south bay of the narthex at Hagia Sophia. This image contains multiple moments from the narrative, including the Virgin informing Christ of the end of the wine, the bringing of the water and the moment of its conversion into wine, and the governor admiring the quality of the new wine

Style and composition

The paintings of Hagia Sophia are important in any discussion of how Byzantine art survived and developed in the years of exile. However, formal analysis is important for more than just its ability to help place Trebizond in a stylistic progression. It provides more evidence of the status and cultural orientation of the empire of Trebizond in this period. The discussion of the wall paintings so far has demonstrated the potential for them to be linked to mainstream Byzantine art; but previous chapters have demonstrated the web of more local contacts and cultural influences that permeated the architecture and sculpture of the church. An analysis of the style of the paintings allows this apparent paradox to be investigated more deeply.

In the discussion that follows I work on the basis that all the paintings can be considered as one coherent body of work. In this I follow David Winfield who, in his analysis of the making of the paintings at Hagia Sophia, argued that they were probably created by a small workshop led by one master artist, and in a relatively short

period (maybe less than three years), probably in the early 1250s.²⁰ I disagree with David Talbot Rice, Marcel Restle and others who have proposed a longer, more drawn out painting campaign, spread out over more than a decade.²¹ There is a definite homogeneity of colour throughout the church and a consistency in the use of motifs, such as the green and brown diagonal scroll which is used to form the borders around scenes, and is repeated everywhere from the windows in the apse to the vault of the narthex. Many scenes include at their centre four concentric semi-circles of light to indicate the presence of God even where they are not strictly necessary; this device is found in the naos, narthex and north and west porches. All these argue for the unitary nature of the design and painting of the church.

Judgement of the style of the paintings at Hagia Sophia is hampered in many cases by their condition. The layers of whitewash that covered the paintings while the building was used as a mosque involved the pitting of the plaster surface. This has destroyed the overall integrity of many compositions. More seriously, it has resulted in the loss of the final layers of paint in many scenes. The main bodies of colour survive, which means that the identification of scenes is still possible, but the final touches, presumably added after the plaster was dry, and which provide many of the most important stylistic clues (notably the detailing of faces and drapery) are now missing.

The exact style of the paintings seems to be unique to the empire of Trebizond, and within that unique to imperial monuments. The only allied paintings are possibly in the monastery of the Panagia Theotokos at Soumela, 40 km to the south of the city, which David Winfield has suggested were also painted by the same artist.²² Soumela was the richest and most powerful monastic foundation in the empire, and a major centre for imperial patronage.²³ The monastery's earliest recorded donation is from John II Grand Komnenos after 1286, but as it was home to an important miraculous icon, the Panagia Gorgoepeikoos painted by St Luke, it is likely that the monastery attracted imperial support before then. It is feasible that the thirteenth-century paintings there were another imperial commission. Unfortunately they are now in such disrepair (and still largely overpainted) that no further assessment can be made. Other than this, however, the style of the paintings cannot be associated with any other surviving paintings. Even contemporary art within the empire, such as the paintings in the western chapels of the monastery of St Sabbas on Mount Minthron of c. 1260,²⁴ and those at Baladan on the yaylas to the south of Trebizond of 1263 are very different in style.²⁵ This indicates that the paintings at Hagia Sophia must have stood out within the empire, and their imperial associations have been apparent to all.

It is, nevertheless, possible to compare the paintings at Hagia Sophia with art from elsewhere and so to place it in a broader chronological and geographical context. In general terms, comparisons can be made of figure and drapery forms, use of gesture and particular motifs, depiction of architecture and use of narrative.

Figure style

The figures at Hagia Sophia broadly fall into two groups. Those in the key images in prominent locations, which were designed to attract immediate attention, are depicted in a very intricate style that elaborates drapery forms and gestures. Those in images that form part of longer cycles tend to be depicted in a less flamboyant manner in order to preserve the clarity of the narrative; their poses are more restrained and drapery simpler in form. However, the two groups share the same essential characteristics, in terms of their interest in portraying the human figure with mass and volume, and their concern for the decorative properties of drapery folds.

Probably the best example of the more elaborate form is to be found in the ensemble of painting around the door from the narthex into the naos. The image of Christ in the tympanum is now lost, but it is surrounded by a well-preserved image of the Annunciation ([Plate XVII](#)). Below this, to either side of the door, are images of the Theotokos and Christ Philanthropos.²⁶ The two figures in the Annunciation are characterised by their heavy intricate drapery, solid presence and restless, dynamic poses. The scene as a whole is enlivened by elaborate background architecture, which distracts the eye and prevents it resting long in any one place. These features are very distinctive and recur in one form or another in many of the paintings in the church. The Virgin on the south side of the Annunciation is given weight by the rigid mass of purple material which sticks out past her left arm like over-starched cloth, and by the cascading folds of her blue maphorion hanging around her legs. Gabriel, on the north side of the door has a thick neck and enormous, naturalistically depicted wings. He leans forward urgently to convey his news to the Virgin. The drapery indicates the main features of his body with sharp white highlights, but the artist seems to have been more concerned with the linear patterns that it can create. Between his legs, these emerge as thick, twisting folds that take on an almost maze-like appearance. The result of this is to give the figure a heaviness and solidity that belies the urgency of his pose. The angels in the Ascension, another of the key images of the church are very similar: their poses, with outstretched rear legs, and billowing drapery

over their shoulders suggest the fluidity of their flight around the mandorla of Christ, but this is counterbalanced by the evident weight of the material, which acts to give the angels' bodies a real, substantial presence.

The whirling drapery of these angels has its roots in angelic images of the twelfth century, such as the angel of the Annunciation at Kurbinovo in Macedonia (1195).²⁷ But where in the twelfth-century Gabriel the mass of whirls and folds are counterbalanced by the etiolated grace and sinuous form of the angel, in the thirteenth-century angels the drapery is used only to add weight and motion to the figure. The profusion of drapery and sense of dynamism have replaced the more elegiac, restrained quality of the earlier images. Similarly, the wings of angels are now larger, their colours more varied and their shapes more fluid.



92 Christ Philanthropos on the south side of the door from the narthex into the naos at Hagia Sophia. Note the way Christ's right hand reaches out beyond the frame of the image

The interest in solidity and weight can also be seen in the figure of Christ Philanthropos beneath the Annunciation ([Fig. 92](#)). Christ is enveloped by a blue himation which bulges out around his waist. It is

made up of a series of alternating dark and light parallel folds, notably around his outstretched right arm, and the lack of definition these give to the body beneath give Christ a sense of mass. The frontal pose of Christ makes this figure appear more static, but the artists have tried to compensate for this by playing with the space of the image. The right hand of Christ is shown stretching out beyond the frame of the image. This adds depth to the figure, who now appears to loom forward into the viewers' space. This device is repeated a number of times in other images, for example in the figures of St Peter on the east side of the drum beneath the dome and David in the bema vault; in the dais of the Deesis on the east wall of the narthex; in the animal-headed throne of Satan in the Last Judgement on the south wall of west porch; and in the wings of the angels in central vault of narthex.

These voluminous figures are repeated in almost every scene in Hagia Sophia. The massed ranks of apostles in the Incredulity of Thomas, the Last Supper and the Ascension appear as friezes of figures, in which the repetition of drapery forms and poses emphasise the mass of their bodies. The perception of weight and solidity in these scenes is only broken up by the use of strongly contrasting colours between each apostle. The only exceptions to this emphasis on solidity are those few figures that are depicted naked, such as the more sinuous figure of Christ in the Crucifixion in the south-east pendentive ([Plate V](#)), or that of Job on his dunghill in the north porch ([Fig. 40](#)). The contrast these images provide to the majority of images shows the importance the depiction of drapery played in the usual portrayal of the human body.

The interest in weight and volume is generally seen as a defining element of the more innovative paintings of the thirteenth century. Talbot Rice and Winfield looked to Sopocani, created for the Serbian King Stefan Uros I sometime after the 1250s for the closest comparisons to the art of Hagia Sophia.²⁸ This too is distinguished by its relatively weighty figures. But the figures at Sopocani lack the sense of urgent movement and agitated poses seen at Hagia Sophia. Bodies are presented in less frenzied, more balanced poses, with a greater sense of calmness. Drapery is characterised by the long sweeping curves of the outlines of figures and hanging loops of cloth. Group images tend to find their form in the repetition of poses (for example, the Communion of the Apostles in the apse, or the crowds of apostles in the Incredulity of Thomas), rather than through the juxtaposition of different poses seen at Hagia Sophia. The closest similarities come in the way faces are depicted. This group of paintings can be contrasted with the more 'conservative' style still evident in the thirteenth century, such as the suffer, flatter and less flamboyant paintings in the contemporary Serbian church of the Holy

Apostles at Pec, or those in the second phase of decoration in the refectory of St John the Theologian on Patmos.²⁹ Equally, the Christian paintings produced in Cappadocia under Seljuq rule, such as those at Karçi Kilise (dated 1212, and which includes the emperor Theodore Laskaris in its dedication) and Tatlarin church B (1215), lack the modelling and grace of the paintings at Hagia Sophia.³⁰

Looking forward to the dominant style of Byzantine painting in the fourteenth century, Trebizond can be seen as a precursor of some of the dominant stylistic motifs that were to emerge.³¹ The similarities and contrasts are most evident in the strongest early exponent of the Palaiologan style, the church of the Theotokos Peribleptos at Ohrid.³² The basic concern of the artists at Trebizond to depict the human body in drapery as a voluminous, weighty figure is a common concern at the Peribleptos, but other stylistic attributes mean that the latter paintings emerge in a very different manner. The figures at the Peribleptos are dominated by a much more angular construction. Drapery folds have clean, precise edges, creating large triangular areas of white highlights, and this angularity even stretches to the depiction of facial types, which look to have been composed to geometric rather than human dimensions. Similar tendencies are apparent in a more subdued form in the Palaiologan paintings of the early fourteenth century, such as the Kariye Camii or St Nicholas Orphanos in Thessaloniki (c. 1310–20).³³ Although this angularity cannot be seen at Hagia Sophia, it is visible in other thirteenth-century churches, notably at Sopocani.

Another noticeable difference between the paintings at Hagia Sophia and those of the Palaiologan period is the general lack of emotion conveyed by the scenes. This impression is no doubt skewed by the loss of all the scenes that were best used to evoke empathy, the Crucifixion, Deposition and Lamentation, as well as of so much of the detail of faces (such as that of Christ as the Man of Sorrows).³⁴ But despite these losses, the calmness and relative inscrutability of the faces in all the other scenes is still evident. Accentuated emotion had emerged in twelfth-century painting, most evident at the church of St Panteleimon at Nerezi, but in the thirteenth century, it became more imbued with pathos, as in the image of the Crucifixion on the west wall of the church of the Virgin at Studenica (1208/9).³⁵ It is seen most powerfully in the Deesis mosaic at Hagia Sophia in Constantinople, now usually dated to immediately after the recapture of the city in 1261. Here the delicacy of the modelling of faces is unmatched. This is the Byzantine imperial commission closest in date to the paintings at Trebizond, and even allowing for the differences in media, it shows how divergent painting styles could be in the thirteenth century.

Architectural backgrounds

Architectural backgrounds are an important feature of the paintings of Hagia Sophia. Some are of great spatial complexity, others simpler, but nonetheless still help to articulate scenes. The most complex array of buildings is to be found behind the Virgin in the Annunciation, which was painted around the doorway from the narthex into the naos (Fig. 93). Its massing of different buildings and structures, and its combination of exteriors and interiors, all painted from different perspectives and oblique angles, combine to give the illusion of a small town. It produces a restless effect as the eye is drawn between buildings and so helps give the figure of the Virgin more movement. Depictions of complex architecture have their roots in twelfth-century images of the Annunciation, such as the icon at St Catherine's or in the wall paintings at Kurbinovo, although the image at Hagia Sophia lacks the theological sophistication of these examples.³⁶ The more usual appearance of architecture is as backgrounds to scenes. In most cases, structures are built up at the edges of scenes to act as frames for the action, and then are linked by hanging drapery and low walls, which act to place the narrative in the front plane (Plate XIX). These devices are used frequently in the early life of the Virgin cycle located in and before the two side apses (Fig. 76). Architectural backgrounds also give a sense of place notably in the use of a baldacchino to indicate the Jewish temple. Little distinction is made between exterior and interior space. This use of architecture is very much the standard use that developed in this period and was exploited to great effect in Palaiologan art. The frescoes of the Peribleptos and St Nicholas Orphanos and the mosaics of the Kariye Camii employ architecture in a similar manner.³⁷



93 The Virgin of the Annunciation over the door from the narthex into the naos at Hagia Sophia. The architecture behind the Virgin is the most complex in the church

Narrative

Perhaps the most interesting stylistic and compositional feature of the paintings at Hagia Sophia is their distinct way of depicting narrative. The wall paintings show a great interest in the accumulation of detail and additional figures. This is a common feature of art from this time on, and can be seen in the blocking of groups and multiplication of figures in the Koimesis images at Sopocani or the Peribleptos, Ohrid, and even the narrative mosaics in the atrium of San Marco, Venice.³⁸ Hagia Sophia clearly belongs to the same tendency, as the multiplication of angels in the chorus beneath Christ Pantokrator in the dome, or those in the Last Judgement around three sides of the vault of the west porch demonstrate. However, it differs in the way these extra elements are employed to enhance the narrative and thereby help to interpret the scenes. This is especially noticeable in the ministry cycle in the narthex. The image of the Multiplication of the Loaves and Fishes, for example, conflates many incidents and includes much incidental narrative ([Plate XVIII](#), [Figs 89 and 90](#)). In addition to the core of Christ and the apostles' actions it depicts the division of the crowds, their sharing out and collecting of bread, all accompanied by a wealth of gestures indicating interaction. Such

multiple narratives and profusion of incident are common in Palaiologan art, but they are never incorporated with the same level of coherence as at Hagia Sophia. Many examples in Palaiologan art include squabbling or wrestling children in the image of the Multiplication of the loaves and fishes. At Hagia Sophia they appear in the first (and more important) of the two Multiplication images where they are shown trying to grab bread from the hands of one of the apostles. They are directly below the central figure of Christ and act as a counterpoint both to him and to the images of harmony and sharing all around them (Fig. 94). This can be contrasted with the same scene at the Kariye Camii, where the squabbling children are divorced from the action, and seem to have been included merely to fill an awkward pendentive space. The Kariye Camii image follows the more standard model from manuscripts, which employ such figures to fill space, such as the images of the Multiplication in the thirteenth-century Gospels, Athos, Iviron MS 5, fol. 63v, or Paris, BN, MS gr. 54, fol. 55³⁹ Trebizond uses them to enhance the narrative.

A similar case can be made in the image of the Marriage Feast at Cana (Plate XIX). Among the multitude of servants and onlookers who populate and enliven the image, appears the figure of the governor of the feast. In the Kariye image, the governor is shown merely offering a glass of water to Christ, and in Iviron MS 5, fol. 363v the governor holds the wine, but looks at a servant.⁴⁰ At Hagia Sophia, this same figure is exploited to much greater effect. Rather than hand a glass to Christ, the artist altered the pose slightly to make him appear to hold up the glass to the light while stroking his beard: he is now a pedantic wine connoisseur contemplating the quality and colour of the liquid within. The artists have managed to infuse a touch of humour into a key element in the image, in a way which adds to the meaning of the scene. The governor appears as a critical witness of the miraculous transformation and as an appreciator of the quality of wine kept until the end of the feast (John 2:10). Even in later images where the governor is shown holding up the glass, as at St Nicholas Orphanos, it is handled in a more ponderous and less imaginative way.⁴¹



94 Detail of the squabbling children in the Multiplication of the Loaves and Fishes on the east vault of the north bay of the narthex at Hagia Sophia. Trebizond, Hagia Sophia. Their fighting is a counterpoint to the calmness and generosity of Christ above

The inclusion of so much incidental detail is not common to all the scenes in the church. Most of the main scenes in the main body of the church present a more limited repertoire of figures, and so concentrate the viewers' attention in a more focused way. However, even in these scenes with fewer figures, narrative and meaning were enhanced by the use of unusual compositions. As was pointed out in the previous chapter, the scenes with the apostles in the bema of the church, which all employ fewer incidental elements, are able to convey particular meanings through their asymmetric layouts, which placed more emphasis on the apostles and their reactions, rather than on the actions of Christ himself. These scenes are given extra coherence by their use of gesture to link disparate parts of the scene together. In the Appearance of Christ on the Lake of Tiberias, the eye is led across the picture by the sequence of pointing hands and facing heads that tie the four episodes together (Plate IX; Fig. 83). Christ acts as a pivot, looking over his shoulder to Peter, but facing the main body of the apostles from whom he receives the fish and bread. Similarly, in the Incredulity of Thomas it is the overlapping hands of the apostles on the right that bring the two halves of the image together (Fig. 82).

Thus, in its handling of detail and composition, the paintings at Hagia Sophia opened up a new avenue in the depiction of narrative.

Many of its features were based in the mainstream of late Byzantine painting, but they pushed its potential in new directions. However, as we have seen, later imperial painters did not adopt many of the devices developed at Hagia Sophia. It seems, then, that the paintings at Hagia Sophia present us with one of the many possible lines of development for Byzantine art after 1204. Its roots lie in twelfth-century Komnenian art, and it has many similarities with developments elsewhere in the Orthodox world after 1204, especially in Serbia. However, the model for Byzantine painting that Trebizond provides, was not one that was commonly taken up elsewhere after 1261. As with the imperial ideology espoused by its emperors, the art of Trebizond charted a separate stream of development. Hagia Sophia presents us with one manifestation of imperial art, and so shows the many possible directions in which Byzantium and the idea of empire could develop during the years of exile. It is possible that, had the Grand Komnenoi recaptured Constantinople, the art that they had supported in exile would have provided the model for the new art in the capital. However, the Palaiologan emperors who did return to the great city preferred to commission work in a less imaginative and more solemn style. The concerns of Constantinopolitan art after 1261 have a different emphasis: they reflect the different agenda of the Nicaean emperors and their concern to locate themselves in relation to the classical, Hellenic past. If the wall paintings that lie below the whitewash of the Panagia Chrysokephalos and St Eugenios are ever uncovered, they may reveal whether this Trapezuntine form of imperial art was strong enough to last into the fourteenth century, or whether the later emperors of Trebizond began to model themselves more closely on the new emperors in Constantinople.⁴²

Style and ideology

It would seem, then, that the wall paintings at Hagia Sophia are closely related to the mainstream of Byzantine art. The style certainly suggests that it was by what we would recognise as a 'Byzantine' artist. This becomes an important point to remember when we turn to look east from Trebizond. So far this chapter has concentrated on placing the paintings within a Byzantine context, and has shown the many essential similarities between the paintings of Hagia Sophia and those of the Palaiologan era. It has also shown the degree to which Hagia Sophia can be fitted in to the milieu of Orthodox painting in the mid-thirteenth century, as epitomised most forcefully in Serbia. However, in many ways the paintings at Hagia Sophia are important for what they are *not* like. All the comparisons made so far have been

with monuments to the west of Trebizond, either in the heartlands of Byzantium or in Serbia. Unlike the discussions of the external sculpture on the porches of the church, the wall paintings seem to have very little in common with local regional trends. The paintings at Hagia Sophia certainly owe nothing to the established stylistic trends in eastern Anatolia and the Caucasus in the first half of the thirteenth century. The royal commissions of Georgia in the early thirteenth century, such as Qintsvisi (c. 1207) or Bertubani (c. 1210), or those produced at the court of the Mqargrdzeli rulers of Armenia, such as the monastery of Akhtala (c. 1205–10) or the church of St Gregory the Illuminator at Ani (1215) for all their variety, can claim no hereditary rights over the style employed at Hagia Sophia.⁴³ These churches all contain sophisticated programmes of paintings, but they are executed in the more static, flatter idiom that prevailed in the Caucasus, and with a more restricted palette. The stylistic and iconographic disparities are clear.



95 West wall of the chapel of king Demetre II (1278–89) in the monastery of Udabno in the Gareja desert, Georgia. The chapel was probably painted c. 1290 in memory of the king who had recently been executed by the Ilkhan Arghun. The small scale wall paintings are reminiscent of manuscript illuminations, rather than the monumental images at Hagia Sophia

The paintings of Hagia Sophia seem to have had relatively little impact in the region either. There is only one isolated example of the

paintings of Hagia Sophia being directly imitated. The iconography and compositions of two scenes, the Ascension and the chorus of worshipping angels from the dome, were copied in the small church of St George at Achi later in the thirteenth century, but their style was considerably altered in the process.⁴⁴ Later Georgian and Armenian painting seems to have continued on its independent course. Throughout the region the style that came to dominate was one derived from manuscript painting. In Armenia, manuscript painting had always been the dominant form, and the work of Toros Roslin and the school at Hromkla reasserted that in Cilicia.⁴⁵ A miniature style also came to the fore in Georgia as well in this period. Although the paintings in Davit VI Narin's funerary chapel at Gelati (1292/3) show a deep debt to earlier thirteenth-century Georgian monumental painting, the rather more innovative wall paintings in the chapel painted in memory of Demetre II at Udabno (c. 1290), owe much more to miniature painting (Fig. 95).⁴⁶ It was only later in the fourteenth century that a style imported from Byzantium began to reassert itself. The paintings at Ubisi and later at Tsalenjikha show the direct import of Byzantine style and even artists to Georgia.⁴⁷ Given the supposed importance of Georgia on the foundation and early development of the empire of Trebizond the conspicuous absence of artistic links is notable.

The purpose of this discussion of the painting style at Trebizond has been to demonstrate how deeply imbued it is with the artistic conventions of mainstream Byzantine painting of the thirteenth century. Although it has many differences, it nevertheless can be seen to have roots in twelfth-century art, and common concerns with the art of the fourteenth century. More importantly, it has been shown to be very different from paintings elsewhere in Anatolia and the Caucasus. This last conclusion is crucial since it creates a very different scenario from that arising from the discussion of the architecture and sculptural work on the church, which have been shown to have had important links with work in Georgia, Armenia and Seljuq Rum. The disparity is stark, and raises a question about why some aspects of the church decoration are closely tied in to regional cultural developments, but others are divorced from them.

At its simplest, this may just be a question of economics and the availability of artists. After the fall of Constantinople in 1204 the artistic economy collapsed, and artists must have been forced to travel to earn money. The economy of the Latin empire prevented grandiose commissions in Constantinople, and the few surviving works that can be associated with the Latin empire are linked to western artists.⁴⁸ It must be assumed that Greek artists gravitated to the new centres, as these would be natural magnets for unemployed artists seeking work.

We know of major commissions in Nicaea, Epiros and Trebizond during the Latin empire, and clearly artists were also lured to neighbouring centres including Serbia and Bulgaria. It is possible that for the building of his church, Manuel was able to turn to local masons, but that for the painting Constantinopolitan artists were available. This is supported by the fact that neither the Seljuqs nor the Armenians, who are the most likely source for Manuel's masons, had an established tradition of monumental painting.

The example of the importation of the four columns of Proconnesian marble for the naos of Hagia Sophia indicates that Manuel was prepared to go to some lengths to acquire particular elements for his church. It is therefore feasible that the choice of artists was a more deliberate policy than an argument based only on economics allows. This would then suggest that the choice of artist was carefully determined by the emperor, and that the choice of style had its own meaning independent of the contents of the art. Clearly, there was a hierarchy of style and meaning in the Byzantine world. This was based, in the first instance, on the materials used. Mosaic was the prime medium. Its use, for real at the Paregoretissa at Arta, and simulated at Sopocani, where a grid was painted over the gold background of many of the scenes to imitate tesserae, demonstrated the pretensions of the patrons (and the state of their finances) in Epiros and Serbia at the end of the thirteenth century.⁴⁹ At Hagia Sophia and in some of the royal churches in Georgia, it is the abundant use of gold and silver leaf and lapis lazuli that testifies to the quality of the art and the wealth and success of those that commissioned them. There are other signifiers of quality too. In the Georgian royal churches of Vardzia (1184–86) and Qintsvisi (c. 1207), a number of scenes and figures painted in each church use Greek instead of Georgian for their inscriptions. In every case Greek is used in the most important scenes, but nowhere else, and this must have been done to give those scenes particular emphasis. Greece (the Georgian word for which, *saberdzneti* derived from the word for 'wisdom') held particular associations of superiority in Georgia.⁵⁰ The question is whether the employment by Manuel I Grand Komnenos of a style that was distinct from those seen elsewhere in the region can be interpreted in a similar way. Was it used specifically to dissociate himself from Christian Georgia and Armenia to so present a distinctively 'Byzantine' image? The analysis of the external sculpture of Hagia Sophia has already shown how difficult it is to discern how Byzantines interpreted style.⁵¹ We know from Nikolaos Mesantes that they could recognise different styles based on cultural origin, but it is harder to ascertain whether they attached ideological values to these differences. To try to impose such conscious distinctions is perhaps to

push a discussion of the style of the wall paintings at Hagia Sophia too far. Even if the assumption that the artists employed at Hagia Sophia had a metropolitan training is correct, there is no concrete evidence to be able to conclude from that that they were chosen to give the church a specifically Constantinopolitan style. Nevertheless, even if we take a less ideological line and argue only that Manuel employed the best artists available to him in Trebizond, then the emperor's preference for art with Constantinopolitan leanings is still remarkable.

Chapter 8

Manuel I Grand Komnenos: the embodiment of empire

The one place where we can be sure that questions of identity and the projection of identity were paramount is in the image of the emperor Manuel I Grand Komnenos himself, which was originally located in the church of Hagia Sophia in Trebizond ([Fig. 96](#)). This image brings together all the issues that have been discussed in previous chapters. This single portrait best illustrates the various tensions embodied in Manuel's reign: the need to balance the competing goals of projecting an international imperial identity, and of grounding rule in the local realities of the Pontos.

Donor images of rulers commemorate piety and devotion, but they do so within a context of power. André Grabar has argued that all imperial art was concerned with the demonstration of the supranatural authority of the emperor.¹ The very existence of the image was testimony to a superior access to wealth, and an ability to marshal the resources necessary for such a foundation. But the details of the image go much further than that: matters of pose, of dress, of titles and of attributes demonstrate the concepts of power that Manuel wished to display, and the political and cultural context within which he placed his authority. Although ostensibly concerned to display piety, here power is explicitly depicted.

The portrait of Manuel was originally painted on one of the walls of the interior of the church, but is now lost. However, two records were made before its destruction and these are reproduced here in full. On

June 24, 1850, the traveller and scholar George Finlay recorded seeing the image 'on the interior wall to the right of the door of the mosque entering from the vestibule', and he described it in his journal as follows:

The figure is of the natural size, but the features are obliterated, the head is without a crown but has a band with a double row of pearls. On the breast is a medallion seven inches in diameter of a blue ground on which S* Eugenios is represented on horseback lance in hand as on many of the coins of Trebizond (aspra or half-aspra). The emperors [*sic*] robes are ornamented with a double row of single headed eagles round the border on circles three inches in diameter. An exact copy of this curious figure would be invaluable for the history of art.



Эта фреска из мнѣхранимостѣхъ на Трапезундской церкви св. Софїи была разрушена турками въ 1572 году отъ боя Тавле и нынѣшнихъ ея нѣтъ.

Cette peinture à fresque, de grandeur naturelle, dans l'église de St. Sophie à Trébizonde, a été couverte d'un badigeon de chaux jusqu'en 1572. C'est pourquoi Texier n'en fait pas mention.

96 Grigorii Gagarin's chromolithograph, published in 1897, of the donor portrait of emperor Manuel I Grand Komnenos. His image closely matches Finlay's description in his Journal, but Gagarin incorrectly identified the image as that of Manuel III Grand Komnenos

It is clear from Finlay's journal that the image was placed low down on the wall, as he was able to remove plaster to reveal the

accompanying inscription which he transcribed:²

ΕΝ ΧΩ ΤΩ ΘΩ ΠΙCΤΟC ΒΑCΙΛΕΥC ΚΑΙ ΑΥΤΟΚΡΑΤΩΡ ΡΩΜΑΙΟΝ ΚΤΗΤΩΡ
ΤΗC Α ΜΩΝΗC ΤΑΥΤΗ ΜΑΝΟΥΗΛ Ο ΚΟΜΝΗΝΟC
Ἐν Χ[ριστῷ] τῷ Θ[ε]ῷ πιστὸς βασιλεὺς κ[αί] αὐτοκράτωρ Ῥωμαίων κτήτωρ τῆς
ἁ[γίας] μωνῆς ταύτη[ς] Μανουῆλ ὁ Κομνηνός

In Christ God, faithful emperor and autocrat of the Romans,
donor of this holy monastery, Manuel Komnenos

Finlay's desire for a copy was given form by the Russian artist, Grigorii Gagarin, who produced a chromolithograph of the image that was published in 1897.³ Gagarin's image accords with Finlay's description closely, but his image provides more details (although he reconstructs some elements, such as the details of Manuel's face, which Finlay said were lost).⁴ In Gagarin's lithograph, the emperor is shown haloed and wearing a fur-trimmed cloak embroidered with medallions containing single-headed eagles. The cloak is gold with a red background to the medallions, and a band of green pseudo-Kufic or arabesque decoration at chest level. Manuel has a double row of pearls on his head instead of a crown, and a second band of pearls adorns his under-robe and continues down to surround the large central medallion, which shows St Eugenios on horseback killing a dragon. The emperor holds a sceptre in his left hand and a horn of anointing in his right. He wears red boots. Gagarin also transcribed the majority of the inscription, which largely agrees with the text produced by Finlay, although he erroneously concluded that the emperor was Manuel III Grand Komnenos (1390–1416).⁵ The image was probably located on the south wall of the church, to the east of the main door from the south porch. It was here that the restorers of the church found a tomb during their work in the 1950s, the most likely burial place of Manuel I.⁶

The portrait has a number of apparent contradictions in its portrayal of a Byzantine emperor, and by examining the image and all its details it is possible to explore the different facets of Manuel's presentation of power.

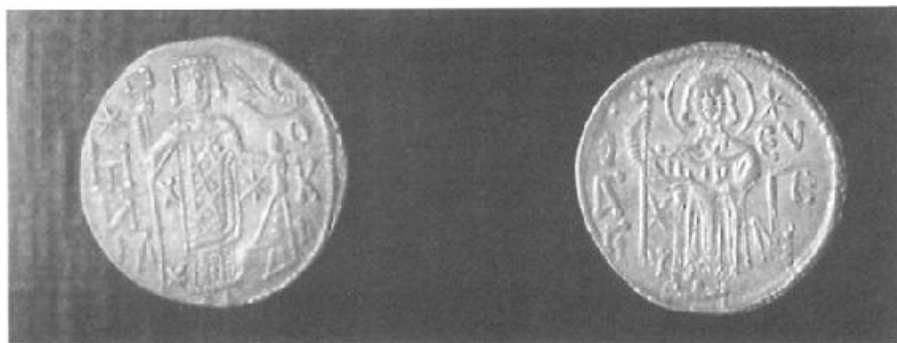
Manuel's claim to universal power is unambiguously proclaimed in the titles that describe him in the accompanying inscription. He is the faithful emperor and autocrat of the Romans. This is the standard title adopted by Byzantine emperors since the seventh century and is commonly seen on coins and in inscriptions in the Komnenian period. Through these titles Manuel let his subjects and his rival emperors know that his claim to the imperial throne and to universal Christian power was alive and actively pursued. It is the principal evidence of the self-identification of Trebizond as the new heart of the Christian world, and the rest of the church must be interpreted in the light of

this. The importance of the imperial titles is demonstrated by the fact that it was the debate over titles and ranks that lay at the heart of the negotiations of between John II Grand Komnenos and Michael VIII Palaiologos in 1282.

However, the costume worn by Manuel does not accord with the titles. If his titles proclaim the ruler of the Christian Roman empire, then one would expect that Manuel's robes would support such a claim. But they do not: indeed their overall appearance is unlike any standard Byzantine imperial garment. The materials of Manuel's robes are undoubtedly of high status: their gold and red thread places them in a context of royal silks, whether Byzantine or Islamic.⁷ However, the form of the robes takes Manuel far away from any standard Byzantine context. The great imperial images that survive from the twelfth century show the Komnenian emperors wearing the standard imperial costume: the gem-encrusted *loros*, the crown with *prependulia*, red boots and silk *sakkos*.⁸ Only Manuel's red boots hint at his imperial status: the other items of his robes, his diadem and embroidered cloak, find no place in the Byzantine hierarchy of dress and are certainly not the typical attributes of imperial power. This divergence from tradition is striking given the extraordinary symbolism of the imperial robes as the principal markers of power. When Theodore I Laskaris captured his rival emperor Alexios III Angelos in 1211 the most potent symbol of his victory was to strip Alexios of his imperial insignia. This was the ultimate signifier of Alexios's loss of power before being confined to a monastery in Nicaea.⁹ The importance of correct dress had been demonstrated in the 1180s when Andronikos I Komnenos set up an image of himself outside the church of the 40 Martyrs in Constantinople wearing what Niketas Choniates describes as the 'garb of a labourer'.¹⁰ According to Choniates, this only served to undermine his already fragile authority. What, then, determined Manuel's unorthodox appearance, and what did it convey to those who viewed it?

The choice of Manuel's robes contrasts with contemporary practice almost everywhere else in the Orthodox world. Certainly, in Serbia,¹¹ and Bulgaria,¹² the *loros* was adopted in most ruler images to symbolise the extent of each dynasty's political ambitions. More importantly, the image set forward by Manuel contrasts strongly with those of his rival emperors in Nicaea and Thessaloniki/Epiros. A number of images of Manuel's greatest rival at the end of his reign, Michael VIII Palaiologos, survive in Macedonia, and all show a consistent use of the key elements of imperial dress.¹³ The portraits, which were commissioned to assert the new emperor's authority after his conquest of Macedonia, all conform to the same key elements: they name Michael as emperor and autocrat of the Romans, and they depict

him with the imperial *loros* and crown.¹⁴ These images commemorated Michael's piety, but they also asserted the universality of his power. As his territories expanded, so the images demonstrated the revival of the empire, its imperial rituals and protocols. The imagery of revival was most concretely stated in Michael's image in the church of the Virgin of Apollonia at Poiane in Albania, where he is even named as the New Constantine.¹⁵ The promise of revival was further strengthened by Michael's appearance with his empress, Theodora, and his son and heir Andronikos II: Constantinople was recovered and the imperial dynasty was in place for the future. The evidence from Thessaloniki is now lost, but even in Epiros the dress code of *loros* and crown was maintained, as can be seen in coins and on the relief of Theodora and her son from the Blachernai church at Arta.¹⁶



97 Coin of Manuel I Grand Komnenos, showing him in Byzantine imperial regalia, with St Eugenios on reverse

That the significance of Byzantine imperial robes was recognised by Manuel can be seen from the plentiful production in his reign of silver nomismata and aspra. These all show the emperor on the obverse, standing, wearing a *loros*, a crown with *prependulia*, and holding a *labarum* and *mappa* (Fig. 97).¹⁷ In the limited field for representation available on a coin, it is clear that all the principal markers of Byzantine imperial status were emphasised. Even in the fourteenth century, after the Grand Komnenoi had accepted lesser imperial titles and so acknowledged the end of their claim to universal Christian power, the visual symbolism of Byzantine power was retained. All known later images of the Grand Komnenoi adopt the imperial Byzantine *loros* as the indicator of status, rather than the robes worn by Manuel I.¹⁸ This evidence serves to point up the unusual nature of the image at Hagia Sophia even more starkly.

It is only when we turn to the regional milieu of eastern Anatolia

that possible contexts for Manuel's choice of robes emerge. In the Caucasus, the use of robes to depict power followed more diverse paths than in the western half of the Orthodox world. Byzantine robes were certainly exploited to present images of supreme majesty, but they were not the only means of displaying power.¹⁹ In Georgia, kings Davit VI Narin (1245–92) and Demetre II (1270–89) were both depicted in the full panoply of Byzantine regalia to promote a specifically semi-sacral monarchy at a time of political collapse and Mongol devastation.²⁰ In Cilicia, the premier Armenian ruler, Levon III, was depicted with his family in a gospel book of 1272 in full Byzantine robes in an image which equally appropriated western ideas garnered from the Crusader states to the south.²¹ Byzantine costume did not have the same universal allure that it did further west; it was merely one way of manifesting power, and not necessarily always the most effective. Earlier pictures of Levon showed him wearing a *chlamys* with a *tablion*, which should properly be a marker of inferiority in the Byzantine world, but which must have different explanation here, given the independent status of the Cilician court.²² At the Georgian court, Byzantine robes seem to have provided little more than a thin veneer of symbolism for the ruler alone over a more deeply ingrained home-grown system of displaying power, which can be traced back to the sixth century.²³ In the majority of surviving Georgian portraits from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the heir to the throne and members of the court wear very different robes, square hats and plain surcoats with rich fur trims, tied with belts. No effort was made to replicate the hierarchical nuances of Byzantine court dress, and the fact that the crowned heir to the throne wore similar robes to the members of his court indicates that these alternative forms of dress had particular resonance in the region.²⁴

It is these alternative means of displaying power through dress that seem the most appropriate to Manuel. They appear in a great deal of varieties in the thirteenth century. The princes Hasan and Grigor of Artsakh (Karabagh) are depicted on the katholikon of the monastery of Dadivank (1214), in plain robes with arm bands and high, peaked hats;²⁵ and the brothers, Zakare and Ivane Mqargrdzeli, who controlled much of northern Armenia, are dressed in a similar form of hat and caftan, with a distinct cut in its lower hem, in a donor image on the east wall of the katholikon at Harichavank (1201).²⁶ Byzantine dress codes seem to have had little force here. Indeed, the local rulers looked elsewhere to formulate effective ways of displaying their power. Hasan Jalal al-Dawla, ruler of Artsakh (1216–61) appropriated Islamic models in his depiction on the drum of the dome of the monastery of Gandzasar.²⁷ He is shown sitting cross-legged, which was the predominant device for depicting power at the Seljuq court.²⁸

An identical pose is taken by Hetum I of Cilicia on his coins.²⁹ What is important here is not that these Caucasian images provide any possible direct ‘models’ or ‘influences’ on Manuel’s dress, but rather that they show the many different ways in which power could be displayed in this region. They reflect the patterns of interaction between local, Muslim, Crusader and Persian cultures, and the need to explain power in ways that could accommodate local perceptions of power, although, given the years of Manuel’s vassalship to the Seljuqs, the absence of Islamic imagery is conspicuous.

The context that emerges from this is one in which the power of Byzantine dress is recognised, but seemingly not at the universal level seen further west. It is one model, but not necessarily the most appropriate. It indicates what was familiar in the region and what was not. This would suggest that Manuel’s decision to be shown in such distinctive robes was probably determined by local ideas of the presentation of power. The inscription gives Manuel the authority of Byzantium and maintains his claim to universality, but his robes appeal to a local constituency, which sought different messages about power. A closer examination of the attributes and design of the robes can explore what these messages are in more detail. These demonstrate how power could be woven in to the very fabric of Manuel’s dress. They serve to refine the otherwise bland image of authority and underline the tension between ambition and reality in Manuel’s state.

In the image at Hagia Sophia, Manuel is recorded as holding two objects: in his left hand he holds a cross-headed sceptre, and in his right hand a conical object identified by Vojislav Djuric as a horn of anointing.³⁰ Both objects argue for Manuel’s legitimacy as emperor, but do so to different audiences and through different allusions. The sceptre was one of the standard implements of power in the Byzantine world.³¹ It was described by Pseudo-Kodinos as the symbol of belief in Christ, and was one of the key elements of imperial portraits by this period: it places Manuel within the traditional Byzantine imperial milieu.³² The horn of anointing, however, is far more unusual. The only other known example is the later fourteenth-century image of the Serbian king Marko at Markov Manastir (1376–81).³³ For the thirteenth century, this attribute is a unique means of articulating power. It must refer to the horn of anointment used by the prophet Samuel to consecrate David [1 Sam. 16.1–13]; a scene which is frequently depicted in Byzantine psalters as the principal signifier of God’s approval of David at the moment of his conversion from shepherd to king.³⁴

As was noted in the Introduction, the means of anointing the emperor was a matter of dispute in the years after 1204. The issues

were set out in a series of letters between the patriarch Germanos II and archbishop Demetrios Chomatenos of Ohrid. Manuel was almost certainly aware of these debates, and conscious of the need for his own coronation to be accompanied by a similar (or better?) display of divine approval. Manuel's coronation was already at a distinct disadvantage to those of his rivals since it was carried out by the metropolitan of Trebizond, whose status in the Orthodox ecclesiastical hierarchy fell below that of the autocephalous archbishop of Ohrid, let alone the patriarch of Constantinople. This made it imperative that Manuel's divine authority be demonstrated to be at least equal to that of his rivals. The horn is an indication of how Manuel argued his claim, and how he positioned himself in this international debate.

Lacking either the holy chrism of St Demetrios in Thessaloniki, or the sanctified oil blessed by the patriarch, the image shows that Manuel turned to the precedent of David to provide the legitimization of his own coronation ritual. The horn acted as a visual shorthand to tie Manuel in with David, the archetypal Old Testament example of divinely approved monarchy, and so enabled Manuel to hold his own against Nicaea and Epiros/Thessaloniki. It was further emphasised by David's prominence elsewhere in the church decoration.³⁵ The choice of David was determined by his pre-eminence as a model of kingship in the Old Testament, and had precedents among young regimes: Basil I, the usurper and founder of the Macedonian dynasty, had acquired Samuel's horn for the Nea Ekklesia in the Great Palace in Constantinople in the 870s.³⁶ The unique circumstances of the Grand Komnenoi in Trebizond also determined the choice as they enabled viewers to draw many other allusions from the image. The non-specific nature of the image (the lack of textual identification or parallels) encourages the search for additional allusions and interpretations, and this gives it a broader range of interpretations than an inscription or the more normal, and restricted, iconography of divine approval: the depiction of Christ crowning the emperor.

It is possible to construct a number of ways in which David could be specifically exploited by the Grand Komnenoi to reflect on their dynastic power. These show how adept the Grand Komnenoi were in manipulating their image for both international and local audiences. The first allusion looked back to the growing interest of the Komnenos dynasty in David in the course of the twelfth century. The Komnenian emperors had increasingly turned to David as a model to explain and enhance their power and authority in both rhetoric and art. Orations to Manuel I Komnenos make frequent reference to the horn of David as symbol of the strength of God's support.³⁷ Later, the Angeloi emperors had attempted to do the same, presumably to display their power as a continuation of that of the Komnenoi. It seems that the

Grand Komnenoi were attempting to reinforce this same idea in Trebizond. David Grand Komnenos had already placed the Old Testament king and prophet on the obverse of his seals.³⁸ The emulation of David exploited the dynastic roots of the Komnenoi, in a way their rivals could not match.

David had a further resonance in the Caucasus, which Manuel may well have been seeking to build on by using this image. The Bagratid rulers of Georgia, who remained the most prestigious ruling house in the Caucasus despite the Mongol invasions and collapse of their power, traced their origins in a direct line back to David, who served as the originator of their power, and the guarantor of their authority.³⁹ As such, David could command a particular respect in the Caucasus for those rulers who could associate themselves with him. Manuel was uniquely placed to exploit this to his own ends: his first marriage was to the Georgian Rusudan;⁴⁰ and the founders of the empire, Alexios and David Grand Komnenos, claimed kinship with queen Tamar. Thus, the horn of anointing seems to provide a visual response to the textual and verbal debates about imperial legitimacy that were waged in Nicaea and Epiros/Thessaloniki. The way in which Manuel's response was framed enabled his argument to be read in both international and local terms.

The other attribute borne by Manuel is the large medallion that hangs across the emperor's chest, which shows St Eugenios killing a dragon.⁴¹ St Eugenios was the patron saint of Trebizond, and had been venerated in the city since the sixth century.⁴² Eugenios's efficacy in protecting Trebizond had been demonstrated most recently during the attack of *Melik* in 1223. It was the saint's miraculous appearance that threw the Muslims into chaos and had led to their complete defeat. After the victory Andronikos I Gidon paid special veneration at the church dedicated to the saint and gave it many gifts.⁴³ The prominence accorded to the saint on Manuel's dress reflects the overwhelming importance of the saint in Trapezuntine society in the thirteenth century with the city and empire under frequent attack. It also locates Manuel's power firmly within the borders of the city. It is St Eugenios who almost always appears on Manuel's coins (see [Fig. 97](#)).⁴⁴

It is, of course, natural that the emperors of Trebizond should make the most of the holy facilities available to them within the city. Here Manuel can be seen to be adopting the same technique as his rivals in the other successor states. In Thessaloniki, Theodore Komnenos Doukas promoted the cult of St Demetrios, as the Latin rulers had in the decade before him, to give his power strong local roots.⁴⁵ Equally, in Nicaea, Theodore II Laskaris venerated the cult of the local martyr, St Tryphon, even at a time when the recapture of Constantinople

seemed more realisable. The saint appeared in a dream to Theodore on the eve of a campaign in 1254, and the emperor later devoted an encomium to him.⁴⁶ Theodore was responsible for the rebuilding of the saint's church in the city, and St Tryphon is also placed next to the emperor on his coins.⁴⁷ In all these cases, the rival emperors were careful to cultivate local cults, and so guarantee local support while at the same time aiming to retake Constantinople.

One other aspect of Manuel's dress shows the way in which his depiction of power was necessarily fragmented between his universal desires and his regional needs. This is the decoration on Manuel's cloak. In Gagarin's image, the cloak is seen to be woven with roundels containing golden eagles against a red (purple?) background. Eagles had enormous symbolic importance in the Roman and Byzantine worlds,⁴⁸ and they appear on many surviving Byzantine silks in western treasuries and museums.⁴⁹ Indeed, at his coronation in 1204 Baldwin of Flanders wore robes that were similarly adorned.⁵⁰ At Hagia Sophia, the eagle recurs with some frequency in the painting and sculpture, and so its symbolism may be explored in greater detail.

Two depictions are of particular importance.⁵¹ These survive among the relief carvings on the exterior of the church: one on the keystone of the arch of the south porch, the other above the window of the main apse of the church. Both are displayed in very similar form to those on the cloak, with the eagles presented frontally, their wings outstretched, and their heads turned to the right. Both are now worn in places which makes it difficult to discern all their details, but that on the south porch certainly has a halo and the top of its wings curl over to produce a form reminiscent of the volute of an ionic capital (Fig. 98). The eagle on the main apse is larger, and retains more details of its carvings (indeed, it seems originally to have been of higher relief and finer craftsmanship). It is shown crushing a snake or dragon in its talons and seems to have straps crossed over on its chest, which possibly hold a sword across its back. Many details of its finely carved feathers can be seen on both wings and on its chest (Fig. 99).⁵²

The locations of the two carved eagles are very significant. One crowns the sequence of decoration above the main entrance to the church; the other marks the exterior of the principal liturgical focus of the building. The repetition of the image, its positioning and its similarity to the depiction of the eagles on Manuel's robes suggest that it has an important symbolism for the display of Manuel's power in the church. The eagles 'brand' the church firmly as part of Manuel's imperial claim: the exterior claims the church to the dynasty, supporting the idea that it was founded to act as a family mausoleum.

A similar use for eagles as symbols of power was adopted at this same time in Seljuq territories. The entrance to the citadel of Konya,

when it was remodelled as the capital of the new Seljuq state, was crowned by a large carving of a double-headed eagle (now in the Ince Minare Medrese Müzesi, Konya),⁵³ and tiles dated to c.1230 from the Seljuq palace at Kubadabad include many decorated with double-headed eagles inscribed with the words *al-Sultan*: an explicit link between the bird and power (Fig. 100).⁵⁴ Further to the south, eagles appear again in a political context on the coins of the Zangid dynasty,⁵⁵ and on a mirror belonging to Artuq Shah (1233–62).⁵⁶



98 The eagle keystone on the south porch of Hagia Sophia

Eagles did, of course, have many other associations, in addition to symbols of power, and it is possible that all of these examples may have encouraged a multiplicity of readings.⁵⁷ Other contemporary images of eagles in Islamic contexts, such as the double-headed eagles on the medreses in Erzurum and Sivas have generally been understood as apotropaic symbols or as ‘soulbirds’ (Fig. 101).⁵⁸ And a similar interpretation could be applied to Christian examples. At Hagia Sophia, a carving of an eagle attacking a hare was placed in one of the compartments of the *opus alexandrinum* floor in the naos (Fig. 102). Unlike the exterior eagles at the church, this one is depicted in profile, and this more narrative depiction suggests that a different interpretation was intended, perhaps as an image of the triumph of good over evil.⁵⁹



99 The eagle on the exterior of the main apse of Hagia Sophia. This eagle has a snake in its talons, and seems to wear something on its back



100 Seljuq tile of a double-headed eagle bearing the inscription ‘al-

Sultan', from the palace of Kubadabad c. 1230



101 Doubleheaded eagle from the Çifte minare medrese, Erzurum. It stands above a palm tree and a pair of lions



102 Panel from the opus Alexandrinum floor of Hagia Sophia showing an eagle attacking a hare. This was taken from Trebizond at the time of the exchange of populations in 1923, and is now in the Museum of Byzantine Culture, Thessaloniki.

It is impossible to see the eagles at Hagia Sophia as anything other than general depictions of power or the triumph of good. The ubiquity of eagles in Anatolian art in the thirteenth century prevents any specific association with the Grand Komnenoi.⁶⁰ Early attempts to interpret the eagle as a heraldic symbol cannot be supported,⁶¹ especially as eagles (both single- and double-headed) are also associated with the Palaiologan family,⁶² and evidence about the adoption by families of ‘heraldic’ emblems in this period is contentious.⁶³ However, Hagia Sophia provides one tantalising clue that this position may have been beginning to change. One more eagle is depicted in the wall paintings in the north porch of the church, where it appears as the device on the shield held by one of the warrior saints that line up along the west wall of the porch. This is perhaps the first evidence of an eagle being used as a badge of membership.⁶⁴ The absence of other evidence and the loss of the shields held by the other warrior saints means that this must remain speculation.

The image of Manuel I Grand Komnenos indicates the ways in which the complex history of the development of the empire of Trebizond is manifested in the material evidence of the empire. We

are dealing with an emperor who proclaimed himself to be rightful heir to the throne of Constantinople, and whose titles demand recognition as the universal ruler of Christendom, yet the details of his image depict him in a different light. His robes set him aside from typical Byzantine ruler images, which seem to undermine his position in international eyes, and which certainly put him outside the standard of ruler depictions in the Orthodox world. Instead they show closer ties to the ways in which power was depicted in neighbouring states, and suggest that he was also concerned to secure his position in local eyes.

We are faced with an image of an emperor who had to balance his ambitions to rule over all Christendom, and his realisation that his power was dependent on the established power structures and cults of the Pontos. The image perhaps hints at the fragility of Manuel's position. As an emperor he had to construct his power through reference to essentially alien cultures –Armenian, Seljuq, Georgian, Laz – in order to appease his subjects and, possibly, to acknowledge his relationship to those ruling lords who considered Trebizond a vassal state. This suggests that, in the thirteenth century, the notion of Byzantine power had to be completely rethought in the Pontos in order to be understood by the local populations. Consequently we can see that a number of different interpretations of what 'Byzantium' meant emerged at this time. The location of Trebizond and its political and cultural location demanded a new, more inclusive image of power to be constructed. The emperors of Trebizond attempted to adapt to the political realities of the day, unlike the inherently more conservative imperial cultures of Nicaea and Epiros. The triumph of Nicaea in 1261 was the triumph of an increasingly inflexible and reactionary view of Byzantine power, which eclipsed a more fluid, and perhaps more realistic, model pioneered further east.

Conclusion

The church of Hagia Sophia allows us to build up a model of the vision of empire espoused by the rulers of Trebizond after 1204. It was an ideal which encompassed great variety, and one which gained its meaning from the juxtaposition of different elements, ranging from the evocation of the ceremonial layout of Constantinople, and even of specific buildings within it, to the appropriation of the standardised repertoire of interlace motifs in eastern Anatolia. This array of sources and influences requires us to rethink the way in which Byzantine identity was formulated in this period. The traditional dismissal of Trebizond as a Byzantine aberration relies on a literal reading of the church and the early history of the empire, but it misunderstands the nature of the problem. It is not the empire of Trebizond that is anomalous, but rather our definition of Byzantium. The argument has been conducted in reverse. Scholars have judged the church (and from it the empire) against an abstract notion of what Byzantium was, based on conditions that did not exist in the period of the Latin empire. This book, instead, suggests that we must judge what Byzantium had become by looking at the church. Equally, scholars have argued that the Byzantine aspects of Trebizond were only skin-deep, covering a Pontic core. This study of Hagia Sophia suggests that in the thirteenth century it was the other way round: Anatolian motifs only decorated a Byzantine body.

It is clear from this that we need to build up a new definition of Byzantium in the thirteenth century. We must take Manuel I Grand Komnenos at his word and accept that he did indeed act as ‘Faithful emperor and autocrat of the Romans’, and we must study how he was able to embody that claim. What emerges is a new formulation of empire.

Writing in 1969, Anthony Bryer was the first to present the defence of the empire of Trebizond against the modern assault, when he argued that the emperors of Trebizond were 'anxious to maintain an impeccably Constantinopolitan outlook among the Greco-Laz of their pocket empire'.¹ This apology for the empire perhaps pushes the case too far in the opposite direction. The evidence of Hagia Sophia suggests that the imperial pretensions of Trebizond were by no means impeccably Constantinopolitan. They could not afford to be, for that would alienate too much of the population of the empire. Moreover, many of the craftsmen available in the city lacked the experience of Constantinople, and possibly the skills or training, to be able to recreate it. Instead, Byzantium and Constantinople (or, at least, the *idea* of Constantinople) were carefully remodelled in order to accommodate the needs and abilities of the new empire.

Trebizond was a Byzantine state, but not in any abstract, purist sense. Byzantium had never been a monolith, and it is misleading to think that it was. The emperors of Byzantium had for centuries been able to maintain and promote a fiction of continuity and a seemingly static ideology of power. The words they employed and the images and buildings they used in Constantinople remained largely the same. The titles of the emperors stood unchanged from the seventh century, and the acclamation of the emperor in the Hippodrome or Hagia Sophia took place in locations built in fourth and sixth centuries. Their rituals were codified in such works as the *Book of Ceremonies* or the *Typikon of the Great Church*. The meanings that lay behind the words and rituals, and the functions to which the buildings had not remained static. Rather, they were constantly modified. The speed of change merely increased after 1204.

The idea of Byzantium constantly evolved and changed, and Trebizond sought to make Byzantium mirror its own circumstances. Manuel's ideal of empire is recognisably similar to that espoused in Nicaea. The core beliefs in the divine right of the emperors and their universalist ambitions demonstrate the common roots of their empires in the beliefs of Komnenian Constantinople. They also share broadly similar conceptions of the political ambitions that Byzantine rulers should continue to proclaim in the absence of Constantinople. However, the nuances of how these empires should act, and how their emperors should be presented to their subjects reveal a number of subtle differences. As in Nicaea and Epiros, Manuel Grand Komnenos and his predecessors used whatever local features were available to promote themselves. They took on the city, its resources, and the abilities of their subjects and adapted them to their new, imperial ends. The distinct nature of the regional traditions in eastern Anatolia means that, in the case of Trebizond, it is possible to recognise these

local features more easily than for the empires further west.

The architectural design and function of the church of Hagia Sophia, the styles of its carvings and its painted programmes demonstrate the diverse range of cultures that Manuel was able to draw upon as he built his church. The question remains of how to interpret them: how much is the design a response to planned needs and aims, and how much to unavoidable local restrictions? The most intentionalist and programmatic interpretation makes Manuel a shrewd and manipulative ruler with an active participation in every aspect of the design of the church. He consciously sought to draw together the different ethnic and religious threads of his empire and its surroundings into some form of coalition so as to build up his power through a series of local identities and thereby offset any attempt to portray him as an outside leader imposed on the region. Such a reading places too much emphasis on the detailed involvement of Manuel in the design and decoration of the church, and requires too political a reading of all its elements. But to take a more *laissez-faire* or functionalist approach is just as revealing. If we assume, in contrast, that Manuel had to make do with the masons, craftsmen and painters that were available to him at any particular point, and that by and large they were left to build the church to only the vaguest brief from its patron, then much of the art in the church can, perhaps, be read as the result of individuals' training and interests rather than be fitted in to some grand imperial scheme. But this is still revealing, as it demonstrates the variety of people that could find employment in Manuel's empire. More important, it shows the ways in which Byzantine imperial power was perceived by the Greeks, Armenians, Seljuqs and Georgians of eastern Anatolia and how that power could be interpreted through local motifs and designs. Hagia Sophia presents the Byzantine power espoused by Manuel as reinterpreted by and for the inhabitants of the empire.

In practice, the building of the church of Hagia Sophia must surely have evolved as a combination of both of these models. Some elements of the church, such as the columns imported from Constantinople, the paintings copied from the Holy Apostles (or descriptions of it), or the donor portrait of Manuel himself were undoubtedly part of a conscious imperial policy to promote the power and authority of the emperor. Others cannot be so closely tied to any design plan: how much notice would have been taken of the interlace designs on the exterior of the church? They must be more likely to reflect the interests and skills of the craftsmen that carved them than the intricate plan of some master-designer (let alone Manuel himself). Yet the fact that such work could be found a place on a great imperial church, in places where it announced itself to all visitors demonstrates

how broad the coalition of artists was that was drawn to Manuel's court.

Hagia Sophia emerges from this study as a metaphor for the empire itself – a Byzantine body clothed in local idiom; just as the portrait of Manuel I Grand Komnenos showed an emperor dressed in local clothes. It also demonstrates the potential of material remains for the study of political and religious ideology. In many ways it is more revealing that the pro-Nicaean accounts of Choniates or Akropolites that have always served to exclude Trebizond from Byzantine history in the past.

Hagia Sophia preserves a greater variety of views and perceptions than any contemporary literary source. Those texts provide a single narrative, determined either by the idiosyncrasies of the author (Choniates) or the political needs of the ruler they served (Akropolites). Hagia Sophia preserves multiple narratives, reflecting the imperial claims of Manuel I, his ability to bring in Constantinopolitan artists, but also the divergent and apparently contradictory perceptions of his power conveyed by the masons and sculptors of the exterior. This book has shown that it is not possible to reconcile all these views into a single ideology. Here the interpretation of art will always be more elusive than that of texts. However, the presence of this range of evidence in one monument opens new avenues of analysis. The diversity allows us to see how an imperial vision emerged outside the constraints of any centralised policy. Empire was not imposed from above by imperial whim; instead it developed from the differing perceptions and needs of all those involved in the building. The church does not have a single authorial voice, just as it did not have a single function. Moreover, its scale and its dominance of the western approach to Trebizond ensured that it never just spoke to the same small, elite audience of the thirteenth-century chroniclers. Those texts only ever preached to the converted – those who already agreed with the regime. Hagia Sophia, and particularly its exterior, spoke specifically to the non-converted – the Seljuqs, Armenians, Georgians and Laz – the non-Greek outsiders who most needed to be impressed by Manuel's display of power.

It suggests that Manuel's imperial image was determined as much by expectations of what imperial power should be as by any individual desire on Manuel's part. His power was not, however, constrained by this, as it would be possible to argue that Michael VIII's was by the compelling vision of becoming the New Constantine in 1261. Rather the varieties of audience and the vagaries of craftsmen and artists involved conspired to redefine Byzantine power for the emperor. Manuel's empire was founded, presumably out of necessity rather than design, on a policy of inclusion (which should

not necessarily be mistaken for toleration). The empire's initial population was a mixed Laz and Greek one, and it soon came to include a large number of Armenians too. Its early history was within the political orbit of Georgia. Any attempt to win back Constantinople would require the assimilation of the Seljuq and Turkoman populations of the heartlands of Anatolia. Any political or ideological aims had to take these circumstances into account. The position of the Grand Komnenoi as Byzantine emperors was fundamentally weak, as an ethnic minority in their own empire, but their great success was to turn that weakness to their advantage. The ideology that evolved in Trebizond seems to have taken all these factors into account in one way or another. The ideal of universal power that Byzantium embodied was given new life in Trebizond.

This can be contrasted with the situation of the emperors of Nicaea. The foundation of their empire and its inheritance of many Constantinopolitan bureaucrats and institutions placed it in a very strong position from the outset. This allowed its emperors to build up and maintain an image of authority based on that strength. This, ultimately, became an exclusionary model, in which power was expressed through an increasingly restrictive imperial ideology. In the long term, Nicaea's attempts to enforce uniformity on the construction of empire, where there had been none in the past, was its greatest disservice to the Byzantine world.

To ignore Trebizond in any history of the thirteenth century is to diminish our view of what Byzantium was, or could have been. The success of the Trapezuntine formula is seen in its success not just in outliving Constantinople by eight years, but by lasting into the fifteenth century at all. The thirteenth-century emperors created a Byzantine identity that could protect them. It gave them an allure that matched the potential given to them by their silver mines.

Appendix

Lists of Rulers in the thirteenth century

The Rulers of Byzantium

Emperors of Byzantium in Constantinople

Manuel I Komnenos
1180-1183
Alexios I Komnenos
1183-1185
Andronikos I Komnenos
1185-1195
Isaac II Angelos first reign
1195-1203
Alexios II Angelos
1203-1204
Isaac II Angelos second reign
1203-1204
Alexios I Angelos joint with Isaac II
1203-1204
Michael VIII Palaiologos
1204-1221
John V Moutzouphlos
1204-1205
Latin Empire
1204-1261
Michael VIII Palaiologos
1261-1281

Emperors of Trebizond

Manuel I Komnenos
1204-1222
Alexios I Gidon
1222-1235
John I Souchos
1235-1238
Manuel I Komnenos
1238-1261
Alexios II Grand Komnenos
1261-1266
George I Komnenos
1266-1280

1080-1123 and Komnenos first reign
 Theodore Grand Komnenos
 1085-1123 and Komnenos second reign
 Alexios I Grand Komnenos

Emperors of Nicaea

Theodore II Laskaris
 1022-1125 Iukas Vatatzes
 Theodore II Laskaris
 1058 IV Laskaris, nominal emperor
 Michael VIII Palaiologos

Rulers of Epiros

Michael Komnenos Doukas
 Theodore Komnenos Doukas
 1215-1230
 1225-1230 in Thessaloniki
 Manuel Angelos
 John Komnenos Doukas
 1237-1242 in Thessaloniki
 1242-1244 Thessaloniki

Latin Emperors of Constantinople

Baldwin I of Flanders
 Henry I of Flanders/Hainault
 Peter de Courtenay
 Yolande
 Robert of Courtenay
 Jean de Drenne
 Baldwin

The Rulers of neighbouring lands

Rulers of Georgia

Tamara
 George II
 Rostom
 David V

~~D247-VI70~~lu
~~D270-II28~~B

Seljuqs of Rum

~~G192-I1187~~Din Kay Khusraw I first
reign

~~R197-III204~~n Süleyman II

~~I204-I220~~Kilic Arslan III

~~G205-I1221~~Din Kay Khusraw I second reign

~~I211-I222~~Kay Kawus I

~~A220-I1187~~Kay Qubadh I

~~G237-I1246~~Din Kay Khusraw II

~~I246-I257~~Kay Kawus II

~~I248-I265~~Kilic Arslan IV

~~A240-I1157~~Kay Qubadh II

~~G265-I1282~~Din Kay Khusraw III

Rulers of Cilicia

Leon II Rubenid

~~1187-III1188/9~~

~~1188-III219~~

~~1210-I1226~~nid

~~1226-I1255~~n I

~~1260-I1269~~tumid

~~1269-III1280~~tumid

Rulers of Serbia

Stefan Nemanjić (Prvovenčani)

~~1186-III1207~~župan

~~1207-III1228~~

~~R228-III234~~

~~V234-III243~~

~~S243-III276~~ I

~~D276-III282~~

~~S243-III276~~ II Milutin

Rulers of Bulgaria

~~1861-A186~~

~~P186-1197~~

~~K187-III207~~

B207-1218

Isaiah

K241-1246

Michael

K257-1257

Constantine Tich Asen

Notes

Notes to Preface

1. G. Finlay, *A History of Greece*, ed. H.W. Tozer, vol. 4 *Medieval Greece and the Empire of Trebizond AD 1204–1461* (Oxford, 1877), 425.
2. Bryer, Winfield, *Pontos*, 182, 223, with full bibliography.
3. A.A.M. Bryer, 'A Byzantine Family: The Gabrades, C.979–C.1653', *University of Birmingham Historical Journal* 12 (1970), 164–87; reprinted in *The Empire of Trebizond and the Pontos* (Aldershot, 1980), Study Ilia.
4. This is best exemplified by an inscription, which awaits a full study, in the Georgian cathedral of Ishkhani stating that the local bishop was sent to Trebizond to be consecrated: W. Djobadze, *Early Medieval Georgian Monasteries in Historic Tao, Klarjeti and Savseti* (Stuttgart, 1992), 209–10.
5. The fantastic Trebizond is invoked in literature from the romance of Amadis de Gaula, and Thomas Gainsford, *The Historie of Trebizond, in foure books* (London, 1616) to R. Macauley, *The Towers of Trebizond* (London, 1956) and D. Dunnett, *The Spring of the Ram* (London, 1987). A.A. Vasiliev, 'The Empire of Trebizond in History and Literature', *Byz* 15 (1941), 316–77, has already sought to separate the historical wheat from the orientalist chaff.
6. E. Gibbon, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, ed. D. Womersley (London, 1994 [first published: 1788]), 3: 706, devotes just one paragraph to Trebizond, which he calls 'Another portion, distant and obscure'. On Gibbon's limited sources, see A.A.M. Bryer, 'Gibbon and the later Byzantine Empires', in R. McKitterick, R. Quinault, eds., *Edward Gibbon and Empire* (Cambridge, 1997), 101–16.
7. A.A. Vasiliev, 'The Empire of Trebizond in History and Literature', 341, notes Finlay's increasing pessimism compared to the conclusion of his earlier 1851 history. Finlay's sentiments are replicated in modern histories either by ignoring the empire, by curtly dismissing it, or by patronising it. See, for example, D. Nicol, *The Despotate of Epiros I* (Oxford, 1957), 9; M. Angold, *A Byzantine Government in Exile* (Oxford, 1975), 12; M. Angold, *Church and Society under the Comneni, 1081–1261* (Cambridge, 1995).

8. G. Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State* (Oxford, 1968), 431–2.
9. N. Oikonomides, ‘The Chancery of the Grand Komnenoi: Imperial Tradition and Political Reality’, *AP* 35 (1979), 299–332.
10. M. Angold, ‘Byzantium in Exile’, in D. Abulafia, ed., *The New Cambridge Medieval History V: c. 1198-c. 1300* (Cambridge, 1999), 547.

Notes to Introduction

1. Any study of Byzantine identity is hampered by terminology. The term ‘Byzantium’ is anachronistic, an invention of the sixteenth century, and would not have been recognised in the thirteenth century; Byzantium referred only to the city of Constantinople. The inhabitants of what we call Byzantium regarded themselves as Romans **Ῥωμαῖοι**. For the sake of simplicity, I use the modern meaning of ‘Byzantium’ and ‘Byzantine’ throughout this book as no more than a convenient shorthand for the empire as a whole.
2. M. Angold, *A Byzantine Government in Exile* (Oxford, 1975); J.S. Langdon, *Byzantium’s Last Imperial Offensive in Asia Minor. The documentary evidence for and hagiographical lore about John III Ducas Vatatzes’ crusade against the Turks, 1222 or 1225 to 1231* (New York, 1992).
3. F. Bredenkamp, *The Byzantine Empire of Thessaloniki, 1224–1242* (Thessaloniki, 1996); D. Nicol, *The Despotate of Epiros* [I] (Oxford, 1957), 103–40; and revision and new thoughts in D. Nicol, *The Despotate of Epiros* [II]: 1267–1479 (Cambridge, 1984), 1–8; A. Stauridou-Zaphraka, *Nikaia kai Epeiros ton 13o aiona. Ideologike antiparathese sten prospatheia tous na anaktisoun ten autokratoria* (Thessaloniki, 1990).
4. There is disagreement about the date of Theodore’s coronation. The two positions are set out by A.D. Karpozilos, ‘The date of the coronation of Theodore Doukas Angelos’, *Byzantina* 6 (1974), 251–61, who argues for 1224/5, and E. Bee-Sepherle, ‘Ho khronos stefeos tou Theodorou Douka hos prosdiorizetai ex anekdoton grammaton Ioannou tou Apokaukou’, *Byzantinisch-neugriechische Jahrbücher* 21 (1971–74), 272–9, who prefers 1227.
5. For brief overviews of the early history of the empire of Trebizond see A.A. Vasiliev, ‘The Foundation of the Empire of Trebizond’, *Speculum* 11 (1936), 3–37; W. Miller, *Trebizond: The Last Greek Empire* (London, 1926), 14–29. Both are discussed in greater detail in [chapter 1](#).
6. The case for Nicaea is made in N. Oikonomides, ‘Le décomposition de l’empire byzantin à la veille de 1204 et les origins de l’empire de Nicée: à propos de la ‘Partitio Romaniae’’, in *XVe congrès international d’études byzantines. Rapports et co-rapports I/i* (Athens, 1976), 22–28 [reprinted in his *Byzantium from the Ninth Century to the Fourth Crusade* (Aldershot, 1992), Study XX].
7. Bryer, Winfield, *Pontos*, 299–301, 303–4.
8. R.L. Wolff, ‘The Latin Empire of Constantinople, 1204–1261’, in K. Setton, ed., *A History of the Crusades 2: The Later Crusades: 1189–1311*, ed. R.L. Wolff, H.W. Hazard (Madison, Milwaukee, London, 1969), 187–233 [reprinted in his *Studies on the Latin Empire of Constantinople* (Aldershot, 1976), Study I]; F. Van Tricht, ‘‘La Gloire de l’Empire’’ L’idée impériale de Henri de Flandre-Hainaut, deuxième empereur latin de Constantinople (1206–1216)’, *Byz* 70 (2000), 211–41.

9. D. Jacoby, 'The Urban Evolution of Latin Constantinople (1204–1261)', in N. Necipoglu, ed., *Byzantine Constantinople: monuments, topography, and everyday life*, The Medieval Mediterranean: peoples, economies and cultures, 400–1453: 33 (Leiden, Boston, 2001), 277–97, effectively contrasts the activity of Venetian and other merchants with the inactivity of the Latin emperors. See also D. Jacoby, 'The Venetian presence in the Latin Empire of Constantinople (1204–1261): the challenge of feudalism and the Byzantine inheritance', *JOB* 43 (1993), 141–201.
10. Bulgaria: R.L. Wolff, 'The 'Second Bulgarian Empire': Its Origins and History to 1204', *Speculum* 24 (1949), 167–203 [reprinted in his *Studies on the Latin Empire of Constantinople* (Aldershot, 1976), Study III]; on the Bulgarian adoption of imperial titles see I. Djuric, 'Titles of the Rulers of the Second Bulgarian Empire in the Eyes of the Byzantines', in A. Laiou-Thomadakis, ed., *Charanis Studies. Essays in Honor of Peter Charanis* (New Brunswick, NJ, 1980), 31–50; Georgia: A. Eastmond, *Royal Imagery in Medieval Georgia* (University Park, PA, 1998), 93–184.
11. Cilicia: H.C. Evans, 'Imperial aspirations: Armenian Cilicia and Byzantium in the thirteenth century' in A. Eastmond, ed., *Eastern Approaches to Byzantium*, SPBS: 9 (Aldershot, 2001), 243–56; Serbia: B.I. Bojovic, *L'idéologie monarchique dans les hagio-biographies dynastiques du Moyen Age serbe*, OCA: 248 (Rome, 1995), 61–70; D. Obolensky, *Six Byzantine Portraits* (Oxford, 1988), 141–5.
12. On the other breakaway territories after 1204 see J-C. Cheynet, *Pouvoir et contestations à Byzance (963–1210)* (Paris, 1990), 146–56, 427–65.
13. Pachymeres, VI.34. There is some doubt about Pachymeres' account, as in the fourteenth century the rulers of Trebizond were still calling themselves 'emperor', albeit 'of all the east, of the Iberians [Georgians] and of the Transmarine Provinces [the Crimea]' rather than of the Romans. See A.A. Karakatsanis, ed., *Treasures of Mount Athos* (Thessaloniki, 1997), 95–98 (no. 2.29); N. Oikonomides, ed., *Actes de Dionysiou*, Archives de l'Athos: 4 (Athens, 1968), no. 4.
14. Coniates, 576; see also 591–2.
15. See, for example: G. Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State* (Oxford, 1968), 418–50. For art and culture compare the treatments of R. Cormack, *Byzantine Art* (Oxford, 2000), 187–210; J. Lowden, *Early Christian and Byzantine Art* (London, 1997), 349–86; L. Rodley, *Byzantine Art and Architecture. An Introduction* (Cambridge, 1994), 263–75. An attempt to treat the city of Constantinople in thematic terms for this period has been made: A. Ducellier, M. Balard, eds., *Constantinople 1054–1261* (Paris, 1996).
16. See, for example, G. Vikan, 'Byzantine Art', in H. Maguire, A.E. Laiou, eds., *Byzantium: A World Civilization* (Washington DC, 1992), 84, in which the years 1204–61 are lost to Byzantium.
17. Local populations varied from the Laz and Armenians of Trebizond to the fiercely anti-Constantinopolitan population of Nicaea: Choniates, 593–4.
18. For an overview of many of the issues see G. Prinzing, 'Das byzantinische Kaisertum im Umbruch –Zwischen regionaler Aufspaltung und erneuter Zentrierung in den Jahren 1204–1282', in R. Gundlach, H. Weber, eds., *Legitimation und Funktion des Herrschers vom ägyptischen Pharao zum neuzeitlichen Diktator*, Schriften der mainzer philosophischen Fakultätsgesellschaft: 13 (Stuttgart, 1992), 129–83.
19. For example, the history of the empire of Nicaea is included within the 'History of Byzantium' in *ODB* 1: 356–8, whereas the histories of Epiros and Trebizond are

treated as separate entities: *ODB* 1: 716–17 and 3: 2112–13.

20. A large number of documents do survive from Epiros, but the vast majority relate to ecclesiastical affairs, being the letters and court records of, most importantly, Demetrios Chomatenos and John Apokaukos. They have most recently been discussed by M. Angold, *Church and Society under the Comneni, 1081–1261* (Cambridge, 1995), with bibliography.
21. Angold, *A Byzantine Government in Exile*.
22. These questions are explored in greater detail in Angold, *Church and Society*, 530–63.
23. Demetrios Chomatenos, letter 114 in J.B. Pitra, ed., *Analecta sacra spicilegio solesmensi parata* (Rome, 1891; reprint: Farnborough, 1967), 6: 489–90. Nikephoros Blemmydes, *Autobiographia sive curriculum vitae*, ed. J.A. Munitiz, Corpus Christianorum. Series Graeca: 13 (Louvain, 1984), 56; trans. J.A. Munitiz, *Nikephoros Blemmydes: A partial account*, *Spicilegium sacrum lovaniense: études et documents*, fasc. 48 (Louvain, 1988), 105–6, also denied imperial claims to universalism.
24. John Apokaukos, letter 15 in V.G. Vasilievski, ed., ‘Epirotica saeculi XIII. iz perepiski Ioanna Navpaktskago’, *VizVrem* 3 (1896), no. 15, 265–7. Angold, *Church and Society*, 530–8.
25. D.J. Geanakoplos, *Emperor Michael Palaeologus and the West, 1258–1282. A Study in Byzantine-Latin Relations* (Cambridge, MA, 1959).
26. Nikephoros Gregoras, *Byzantina Historia*, eds. L. Schopen, I. Bekker (Bonn, 1829–55), i.128; trans. J.L. van Dieten, *Nikephoros Gregoras: Rhomäische Geschichte* (Stuttgart, 1973), 128 and 257 n. 223.
27. The work of emperor George of Trebizond (1266–80) against the union is noted by pope Nicholas III: J. Gay, ed., *Les registres de Nicolas III* (Paris, 1898–1938), 136A, 136 no. 384. See also A.A.M. Bryer, ‘Trebizond and Rome’, *AP* 26 (1964), 290–307. Similarly Bulgaria and Serbia acted as centres of opposition to the church settlement of Michael VIII.
28. The political functions of the rhetoric of renewal, as a way to disguise change, are well examined by M. Mullett, ‘Alexios I Komnenos and imperial renewal’, in P. Magdalino, ed., *New Constantines the Rhythm of Imperial Renewal in Byzantium, 4th–13th Centuries*, SPBS: 2 (Aldershot, 1994), 259–67, at 259.
29. Shield-raising seems to have been common until the reign of Phokas in the seventh century, but after that none are recorded (apart from usurpations) until revived by the emperors of Nicaea. The motif continued to be used in art in between: C. Walter, ‘Raising on a Shield in Byzantine Iconography’, *REB* 33 (1975), 133–75.
30. D. Nicol, ‘Kaisersalbung. The unction of emperors in late Byzantine coronation ritual’, *BMGS* 2 (1976), 37–52. This interpretation has now been disputed by R. Macrides, ‘Bad Historian or Good Lawyer? Demetrios Chomatenos and Novel 131’, *DOP* 46 (1992), 187–96. The relevance of anointing to Trebizond is explored in greater depth in [chapter 8](#).
31. Angold, *A Byzantine Government in Exile*, 60–79, 148–81.
32. R. Macrides, ‘From the Komnenoi to the Palaiologoi: imperial models in decline and exile’, in Magdalino, ed., *New Constantines*, 269–82, esp. 280–2.
33. There are, however, a few coins showing John III being crowned by St

- Constantine: M.F. Hendy, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection* 4, part 2: *The Emperors of Nicaea and their Contemporaries (1204–1261)*, Dumbarton Oaks Catalogues (Washington DC, 1999), 491.
34. Hendy, *Catalogue*, 4/2: 483. Later Theodore II was also to call himself *porphyrogenetos*: *ibid.*, 518.
 35. Gregoras, 1: 53–4.
 36. These themes are all explored in Macrides, ‘From the Komnenoi to the Palaiologoi’, 280–82. Nicaean ideas about noble birth have also been noted by D. Angelov, ‘Nobility and the Imperial Ideal in the *basilikoi logoi* of the Nicaean Empire’, in *BSCA* 24 (1998), 25–26.
 37. Choniates, 454–6, 483–4; H. Hunger, I. Sevcenko, eds., *Des Nikephoros Blemmydes BaaiXIKOÇ ‘Avôpiác und dessen Metaphrase von Georgios Galesiotes und Georgios Oinaïotes*, Wiener Byzantinische Studien: 18 (Vienna, 1986), 52 (no. 28).
 38. A.-M. Talbot, ‘The Restoration of Constantinople under Michael VIII’, *DOP* 47 (1993), 243–61; R. Macrides, ‘The New Constantine and the New Constantinople – 1261?’, *BMGS* 6 (1980), 13–41.
 39. Pachymeres, 3: 259–60. T. Thomov, ‘The Last Column in Constantinople’, *ByzSlav* 59/1 (1998), 80–91. Michael’s act had one more recent precedent, that of Andronikos I Komnenos who set up a painted image of himself on a pillar outside the church of the Forty Martyrs of Sebaste: Coniates, 332.
 40. P. Magdalino, ‘Hellenism and Nationalism in Byzantium’, in his *Tradition and Transformation in Medieval Byzantium* (Aldershot, 1991), Study XIV, 10. On Hellenes in Thessalonikan ideology see Bredenkamp, *Empire of Thessaloniki*, 169–71.
 41. Theodore Laskaris, *Epístola XXXII ad G. Acropolitam*, in N. Festa, ed., *Theodori Ducae Lascaris Epistulae CCXVII* (Florence 1898), 107; trans. C. Mango, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire 312–1453* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 1972, reprinted Toronto, 1986), 245.
 42. M. Angold, ‘Byzantine ‘Nationalism’ and the Nicaean Empire’, *BMGS* 1 (1975), 49–70; and Angold, *A Byzantine Government in Exile*, 29–33. C. Mango, ‘Byzantinism and Romantic Hellenism’, *JWCI* 28 (1965), 29–43 has warned of the dangers in misunderstanding Byzantines’ use of the term.
 43. Coniates, 601–2, 617–18; Angold, *A Byzantine Government in Exile*, 32.
 44. F. Dölger, *Regesten der Kaiserurkunden des Oströmischen Reiches von 565–1453*, vol. 3: *Regesten von 1204–1282* (Munich, 1977), no. 1817; P. Charanis, ‘The Jews in the Byzantine Empire under the First Palaeologi’, *Speculum* 22 (1947), 75–77. Although there was a history of forced conversion in the Byzantine empire (most significantly under Basil I), the Nicaean conversions seem to be more closely tied into the state-building efforts of its emperors. They can certainly be contrasted with the persecution of Jews in Thessaloniki by Theodore in 1229, which was undertaken out of a need for money to finance his war effort: S. Bowman, *The Jews of Byzantium (1204–1453)* (Alabama, 1985), 13–18, 229.
 45. Wolff, ‘The Latin Empire of Constantinople, 1204–1261’, 224.
 46. Akropolites, 166.
 47. Nikephoros Gregoras, *Byzantina Historia*, ed. L. Schopen (Bonn, 1829), 1: 43–4; M. Angold, ‘Byzantium in Exile’, in D. Abulafia, ed., *The New Cambridge Medieval*

History 5: C.1198-C.1300 (Cambridge, 1999), 550.

48. The evidence is gathered in Bredenkamp, *Empire of Thessaloniki*.
49. This led to a council in 1232 in Nicaea to try to restore unity between these two areas: Laurent, *Regestes*, no. 1261.
50. On the use of court titles in Thessaloniki see Akropolites, 34 §21; Bredenkamp, *Empire of Thessaloniki*, 182–9.
51. Hendy, *Catalogue*, 4/2: 574.
52. See for example, a coin of Theodore: Hendy, *Catalogue*, 4/2: 550; and a seal of John, which gave prominence to the walls of the city: G. Zacos, A. Vegler, *Byzantine Lead Seals* vol 1, part 1 (Basel, 1972), 105 (No. 115). The inscription on the seal retains the traditional universal title of the emperor. See also T. Bertelè, 'Monete di Giovanni Comneno Duca, Imperatore di Salónica (1237–44)', *Numismática (Rivista bimestrale di numismática)* 16 (1950), 61–79.
53. R. Macrides, 'Subversion and Loyalty in the Cult of St Demetrios', *ByzSlav* 51 (1990), 189–97.
54. A.K. Orlandos, *He Paregoretissa tes Artes* (Athens, 1963).
55. This is recorded by Nicol, *Epiros* [I], 210–11.
56. S. Lampros, 'Theonas: Agnostos khronographos tes autokratorias tes Trapezountos', *Neos Hellenomnemon* 1/2 (1904), 191–202, on the lost official history of the empire by Theonas, which covered 1112–1291.
57. Michael Panaretos, *Περὶ τῶν Μεγάλων Κομνηνῶν* in *AP* 22 (1958), 61–81; ed. O. Lampsides; 1204 to 1282 are recounted at 61i–63g; Joseph Lazaropoulos, *A further partial collection from among the saint's numerous miracles*, ed. & trans. J.O. Rosenqvist, *The Hagiographie Dossier of St Eugenios of Trebizond in Codex Athous Dionysiou 154*, *Studia Byzantina Upsaliensia*: 5 (Uppsala, 1996), 246–358. In addition, 89 acts and charters from the thirteenth century survive from the monastery of Vazelon, but these are of more value to social and economic history: Th. Ouspensky, V. Bénéchevitch, *Actes de Vazelon. Matériaux à l'histoire de la propriété rurale et monastique à Byzance aux XIII–XV siècles*, *Gosudarstvennaia publitsnaia biblioteka v Leningrade. Serii V: Orientalia*: 2 (Leningrad, 1927); A.A.M. Bryer is currently working on a new edition of the charters.
58. C. Foss, *Nicaea: A Byzantine Capital and Its Praises* (Brookline, MA, 1996), 93–5; H.W. Buchwald, 'Lascarid Architecture', *JOB* 28 (1979), 261–96; S. Eyice, 'Les palais byzantin de Nymphaion près d'zmir', in F. Dölger, H.-G. Beck, eds., *Akten des XI. Internationalen Byzantinistenkongresses, München 1958* (Munich, 1960), 150–3.
59. M. Alpatov, 'Les fresques de Sainte-Sophie de Nicée', *Echos d'Orient* 25 (1926), 42–45, saw a few fragments of wall painting at the beginning of the twentieth century, which he dated to the mid-thirteenth century, but these are now lost. A papal mission to Nicaea in 1234 records praying in front of wall paintings of the first ecumenical council, which may well date to the period of the Nicaean empire; see J. Gardner, 'The Artistic Patronage of Pope Nicholas IV', *Annali della Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa Series IV* 2 (1997), 2.
60. H. Buchthal, 'Studies in Byzantine Illumination of the Thirteenth Century', *Jahrbuch der Berliner Museen* 25 (1983), 27–102; A.W. Carr, *Byzantine Illumination 1150–1250. The Study of a Provincial Tradition* (Chicago, 1987).
61. H. Buchthal, H. Belting, *Patronage in thirteenth-century Constantinople. An atelier of*

- late Byzantine book illumination and calligraphy, *Dumbarton Oaks Studies*: 16 (Washington DC, 1978).
62. R. Janin, *Les églises et les monastères des grands centres byzantins (Bithynie, Hellespont, Latros, Galèsios, Trébizonde, Athènes, Thessalonique)* (Paris, 1975), 345–419, includes no reference to works in the period 1224–42.
 63. L. Rodley, *Byzantine Art and Architecture. An Introduction* (Cambridge, 1994), 270–1.
 64. Orlandos, *He Paregoretissa tes Artes*.
 65. See, for example, M. McCormick, *Eternal Victory. Triumphal rulership in late antiquity, Byzantium, and the early medieval West* (Cambridge, 1986); M. McCormick, 'Emperors', in G. Cavallo, ed., *The Byzantines* (Chicago, London, 1997), 230–54. Also S.R.F. Price, *Rituals and Power. The Roman imperial cult in Asia Minor* (Cambridge, 1984); A. Cameron, 'The construction of court ritual: the Byzantine Book of Ceremonies', in D. Cannadine, S.R.F. Price, eds., *Rituals of Royalty. Power and ceremonial in traditional societies* (Cambridge, 1987), 106–36; A. Grabar, *L'empereur dans l'art byzantin* (Paris, 1936).

Notes to Chapter 1

1. C. Mango, *Byzantine Architecture* (London, 1976), 166.
2. On contexts as imposed limits, see M. Bal, N. Bryson, 'Semiotics and Art History', *ArtB* 73 (1991), 174–208, esp. 176–80.
3. R.S. Nelson, R. Shiff, eds., *Critical Terms for Art History* (Chicago, 1996), 116–28.
4. E.R. Hoffman, 'Pathways to Portability: Islamic and Christian Interchange from the Tenth to the Twelfth Century', *Art History* 24 (2001), 17–50.
5. S.E. Alcock, 'The reconfiguration of memory in the eastern Roman empire', in S.E. Alcock, T.N. D'Altroy, K.D. Morrison, CM. Sinopoli, eds., *Empires. Perspectives from Archaeology and History* (Cambridge, 2001), 323–50.
6. The most recent analysis of the early history of the empire is R. Shukurov, *Veliki Komniny i vostok (1204–1461)* (St Petersburg, 2001), 62–109.
7. Alexios was probably related to queen Tamar, Panaretos, 613, calls her his paternal aunt; and Kartlis Tskhovreba calls him a kinsman: *KTs* II, 14222; trans. Vivian, 87. See C. Toumanoff, 'On the Relationship between the Founder of the Empire of Trebizond and the Georgian Queen Tamar', *Speculum* 15 (1940), 299–312.
8. *KTs* II: 1428.23; trans. Vivian, 86–87.
9. One of the main ancestral homes of the Komnenoi was at Kastamon: J.G. Crow, 'Alexios Komnenos and Kastamon: castles and settlement in middle Byzantine Paphlagonia', in M. Mullett, D. Smythe, eds., *Alexios I Komnenos I: Papers*, BBTT: 4.1 (Belfast, 1996), 12–36; Andronikos I Komnenos had spent a brief period before 1182 in internal exile at Oinaion: Choniates, 225–7; Bryer, Winfield, *Pontos*, 101, with references.
10. R. Macrides, 'What's in the name «Megas Komnenos»?', *AP* 35 (1978–79), 238–45.
11. This is recorded in a marginal note in a psalter in the library of Vatopedi

monastery on Mount Athos (MS 760, fol. 294a): N. Oikonomides, 'Cinq actes inédits du patriarche Michel Autôreianos', *REB* 25 (1967), 141 n. 67:

ὁ εὐσεβέστατος Μέγας Κομνηνὸς Κύρις Δαβὶδ. For a facsimile see Chrysanthos, 360.

12. J.-C. Cheynet, *Pouvoir et contestations à Byzance (963–1210)* (Paris, 1990), 146–56.
13. C. Cahen, 'Seljukides de Rûm, Byzantines et Francs d'après le *Seljuknâme* anonyme', in *Pankarpeia. Mélanges Henri Grégoire* 2, (Brussels, 1951), 97–106, esp. 102 [= *Annuaire de l'Institut de Philologie et d'Histoire Orientales et Slaves* 11 (1951)].
14. Pachymeres, VI.34. There is some doubt about Pachymeres' account, as in the fourteenth century the rulers of Trebizond were still calling themselves 'emperor', albeit 'of all the east, of the Iberians [Georgians] and of the Transmarine Provinces [the Crimea]' rather than of the Romans. See A.A. Karakatsanis, ed., *Treasures of Mount Athos* (Thessaloniki, 1997), 95–98 (no. 2.29); N. Oikonomides, ed., *Actes de Dionysiou*, Archives de l'Athos: 4 (Athens, 1968), no. 4.
15. Despite the Georgian claims, Erzurum had in fact fallen to the Seljuqs in 1202: C.E. Bosworth, *The New Islamic Dynasties. A chronological and genealogical manual* (Edinburgh, 1996), 218.
16. *KTs* II: 142_{18.23}; trans. Vivian, 87.
17. *KTs* II:156_{4.10}; trans. Vivian, 102. M. Kursanskis, 'L'Empire de Trébizonde et la Géorgie', *REB* 35 (1977), 237–56, at 245–7, suggests that 'Greece' may refer instead to the Seljuqs of Rum, but that seems unlikely in this context. For an overview and summary of the contentious issue of Georgian influence in Trebizond see A.A.M. Bryer, 'Preface: A View from the Byzantine Side of the River Akampsis', in Vivian, *The Georgian Chronicle*, xviii n. 17.
18. Fallmerayer, *Geschichte*, 117; but see Kursanskis, 'L'Empire de Trébizonde et la Géorgie', 247–9; Panaretos, 62_{19–20}.
19. Ibn Bibi, 67; Gregory Abu'l-Faraj (Bar Hebraeus), *The Chronography of Gregory Abu'l Faraj, the son of Aaron, the Hebrew Physician commonly known as Bar Hebraeus being the first part of his political history of the world, [Chronicon syriacum]*, ed. & trans. W.E.A. Budge (Oxford, 1932), 369, records that a 'Kyr Alexios' was killed during the siege of Sinope, but this seems to be a confusion as Alexios is known to have survived until 1222. (For a long time it was understood to be a mistaken reference to David, but he had died in 1212.) Abulfeda, 'Annales d'Abu'l-Fédâ', in *RHCHO* 1 (Paris, 1872), 87, also mentions the capture of an Al-Ashkhari by Kay Kawus I in 1214. The translator of *RCH* interprets this as Laskaris, but Vasiliev, 'The Foundation of the Empire of Trebizond', 29, suggests that it may in fact be Alexios Komnenos, as Laskaris is not known to have been captured by the Seljuqs.
20. Ibn al-Athir, 'al-Kamel fi al-Tawarikh', *RHCHO* 2, part 1 (Paris, 1887), 101.
21. Lazaropoulos, *Synopsis*, 308–34. Shukurov, *Veliki Komniny i vostok*, 116–35. On Seljuq history and relations with Trebizond, see A.G.C. Sawides, 'The Trapezuntine Sources of the Seljuq Attack on Trebizond in AD 1222–1223', *AP* 43 (1990–1991), 102–30; C. Cahen, *Pre-Ottoman Turkey* (London, 1968), 121–36; M. Kursanskis, 'L'Empire de Trébizonde et les Turcs au 13e siècle', *REB* 46 (1988), 109–24.
22. Ibn Nazif al-Hamawi, *Tarikh Mansuri*, excerpted in C. Cahen, 'Questions d'histoire de la province de Kastamonu au XI^e siècle', *Selçuklu Arastirmalan*

Dergisi 3 (1971), 147 [reprinted in his *Turcobyzantina et Oriens Christianus* (London, 1974), Study X].

23. J. Richard, ed., *Histoire des Tartares* (Paris, 1965), 70. Simon's text is preserved in Vincent of Beauvais's *Speculum Historiae*. The alliance with the Khwarazmians is implied by the fact that the routed troops all fled to Trebizond: Gregory Abu'l-Faraj, 395. On the battle, see Cahen, *Pre-Ottoman Turkey*, 129–30.
24. C. Cahen, 'Le commerce Anatolien au début du XIIIe siècle', in *Mélanges d'histoire du Moyen Age dédiés à la mémoire de Louis Halphen* (Paris, 1951), 91–101.
25. ODB 1: 422–3, 453–4.
26. On the population of Trebizond: A.A.M. Bryer, 'Some Notes on the Laz and Tzan [I]', *BK* 21–22 (1966), 174–95, & 'Some Notes on the Laz and Tzan [II]', *BK* 23–24 (1967), 161–68 [reprinted in his *Peoples and Settlements in Anatolia and the Caucasus* (Aldershot, 1988), Studies XIv & b]; A.A.M. Bryer, 'Rural society in the Empire of Trebizond', *AP* 28 (1966–67), 152–60.
27. More than 30 Tzan names have been identified in the acts: F.I. Uspenskii, V.V. Benesevic, *Vazelonskie Akty. Materialy dlia istorii krest'ianskogo i monastyrskogo zemlevladieniia v vizantii XIII-XV vekov*, [Th. Ouspensky, V. Bénéchevitch, *Actes de Vazelon. Matériaux à l'histoire de la propriété rurale et monastique à Byzance aux XIII-XV siècles*] Gosudarstvennaia publicnaia biblioteka v Leningrade. Serii V: Orientalia: 2 (Leningrad, 1927).
28. C. Cahen, *The Formation of Turkey. The Seljukid Sultanate of Rum: Eleventh to Fourteenth Century* (London, 2001), 69–71, 173–95; W.E.D. Allen, *A History of the Georgian People* (London, 1932), 109–20; J. Matuz, 'Der Niedergang der anatolischen Seldschuken bei Köseh-Dagh' *Central Asiatic Journal* 17 (1973), 180–99. Loyalties were sharply divided by the battle: the Seljuq forces were led by the Abkhazian Dardan Sharvashidze, but among the Mongol troops were Georgians under Mqargrdzeli command: *KTs* II, 192–4; trans. Brosset, 518–21.
29. Ala al-Din Ata-Malik Juvaini, *The History of the World-Conqueror*, ed. M.M. Qazvini, trans. J.A. Boyle (Manchester, 1958), 1, 257.1 follow the interpretation of A.A.M. Bryer, 'The Grand Komnenos and the Great Khan at Karakorum in 1246', in R. Curiel, R. Gyselen, eds., *Itinéraires d'Orient. Hommages à Claude Cahen*, *Res Orientales*: 6 (Bures-sur-Yvette, 1994), 257–61.
30. *Elz*, 1: 902–3; H. Manandian, *The Trade and Cities of Armenia in Relation to Ancient World Trade*, trans. N. Garsoi'an (Lisbon, 1965), 189–97; Bryer, Winfield, *Pontos*, 56, 92; Cahen, 'Le commerce Anatolien', 97. This trend began in the 1240s, but was greatly increased after Hülegü's sacking of Baghdad in 1258.
31. Both city states were certainly already trading around the Black Sea in the 1220s and 1230s. S.P. Karpov, *L'Impero di Trebisonda, Venezia, Genova e Roma, 1204–1461. Rapporti politici, diplomatici e commerciali* (Rome, 1986), 29–69 [trans. of S.P. Karpov, *Trapezundskaia imperiia i zapadnoevropeiskie gosudarstva v XIII-XIV vv* (Moscow, 1981)].
32. The evidence for silver mining is analysed by Bryer, Winfield, *Pontos*, 303–4.
33. M. Kursanskis, 'The coinage of Grand Komnenos Manuel I', *AP* 35 (1978–1979), 23–37; W. Wroth, *Catalogue of the Coins of the Vandals, Ostrogoths and Lombards and of the Empires of Thessalonica, Nicaea and Trebizond in the British Museum* (London, 1911), 236–57, esp. 256.
34. Jean de Joinville, *Vie de Saint Louis*, ed. and trans. J. Monfrin (Paris, 1995), 294 (§591–2).

35. Ibn Bibi, 286; M. Nystazopoulou, 'La dernière reconquête de Sinope par les Grecs de Trébizonde', *REB* 22 (1964), 241–9.
36. Panaretos, 61.
37. 'The weights and measures of Tabriz are as one with those of Trebizond': F. Pegolotti, *La Pratica della Mercatura*, ed. A. Evans (Cambridge MA, 1936; reprint: New York, 1970), 29, repeated almost verbatim on 31.
38. M.F. Hendy, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection* 4, part 2: *The Emperors of Nicaea and their Contemporaries (1204–1261)*, Dumbarton Oaks Catalogues (Washington DC, 1999), 36. A.A.M. Bryer, 'The Fate of George Komnenos, Ruler of Trebizond (1266–1280)', *BZ* 66 (1973), 339 reports an unpublished hoard from Tabriz.
39. J.P. Fallmerayer, *Geschichte des Kaisertums von Trapezunt* (Munich, 1827; reprinted Hildesheim, 1964).
40. Choniates, 626.
41. Niketas Choniates, *Orationes et Epistulae*, ed. J.L. van Dieten (Berlin, New York, 1972), 127, 135–6; trans. F. Grabler, *Kaisertaten und Menschenschicksale* (Graz, Vienna, Cologne, 1972), 217, 231–2.
42. For an analysis of the ideal virtues of power in the twelfth century, see Magdalino, *Manuel I Komnenos*, 413–88.
43. Choniates, *Orationes et Epistulae*, 170; trans. Grabler, *Kaisertaten und Menschenschicksale*, 291–2.
44. The references have been collated by A.A. Vasiliev, 'The Foundation of the Empire of Trebizond', *Speculum* 11 (1936), 30–37.
45. Akropolites, para 7: ... **Ἀλεξίου τοῦ τῆς Τραπεζοῦντος κρατήσαντος**.
46. Nikephoros Gregoras, *Byzantina Historia*, eds. L. Schopen, I. Bekker (Bonn, 1829–55), 13: **τοῦ τῆς Κολχίδος κρατήσαντος γῆς Ἀλεξίου τοῦ Κομνηνοῦ**; trans. J.L. van Dieten, *Nikephoros Gregoras: Rhomäische Geschichte* (Stuttgart, 1973–88), 69.
47. Pachymeres, VI, 34: **ὁ ἄρχων τῶν Λαζῶν**.
48. In a similar way to the Grand Komnenoi, the rulers of Epiros were also downgraded by hostile historians, being given the only surname of Angelos which they never themselves used. See D. Nicol, *Epiros* II, 3 and n. 4.
49. V. Laurent, 'Sceau inédit de David Comnène, Libérateur du Pont et confondateur de l'Empire de Trébizonde', *AP* 19 (1954), 151–60; V. Laurent, *Les sceaux byzantins du Médailleur Vatican* (Vatican City, 1962), 186–9, No. 178; Bryer, 'David Komnenos and Saint Eleutherios', 165–6; G. Zacos, A. Vegler, *Byzantine Lead Seals* 1 part 3 (Basel, 1972), 1571 – (No. 2754).
50. G. Perrot, E. Guillaume, J. Delbet, *Exploration archéologique de la Galatie et de la Bithynie, de la Cappadoce et du Pont, exécutée en 1861 et publiée sous les auspices du ministre d'Etat* (Paris, 1862), 18.
51. The only actual evidence of this title is from the lost image of Manuel I Grand Komnenos seen by Finlay in 1850: **Ἐν Χριστῷ τῷ Θεῷ πιστὸς Βασιλεὺς καὶ Αὐτοκράτωρ τῶν Ῥωμαίων κτῆτορ τῆς μονῆς ταύτης Μανουὴλ ὁ Κομνηνός**. Finlay's description is given in Finlay's diaries: J.M. Hussey, ed., *The Journals and Letters of George Finlay* 1, *The Journals* (Camberley, Surrey, 1995), 301; the image is reproduced by G. Gagarine, *Sobranie vizantiiskikh, gruzinskikh i drevnerusskikh ornamentov i pamiatnikov' arkhitektury* [*Recueil d'ornements et d'architecture*

byzantines, géorgiens et russes] (St Petersburg, 1897), pl. 25. The full text and image are reproduced in [chapter 8](#).

52. Pachymeres, VI, 34.

53. M. Angold, 'Byzantine 'Nationalism' and the Nicaean Empire', *BMGS* 1 (1975), 49–70. See also Introduction.

54. Choniates, 252. For interpretations of Choniates's attacks on Andronikos Komnenos see A. Kazhdan, S. Franklin, *Studies on Byzantine Literature of the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries* (Cambridge, 1984), 257–60; A. Eastmond, 'An Intentional Error? Imperial Art and "Mis"-Interpretation under Andronikos I Komnenos', *ArtB* 73 (1994), 502–10.

55. Laonikos Chalkokondyles, *Laonici Chalcocondylae Historiarum Demonstrationes*, ed. E. Darkó (Budapest, 1922), II, 218–19.

Notes to Chapter 2

1. This is reproduced by Bryer, Winfield, Pontos, pl. 177.

2. Finlay, *Journals*, 302.

3. The bell tower, which was erected in 1426/7 and painted in 1442/3 (Bryer, Winfield, *Pontos*, 233–6, plates 176–91; G. Mület, D. Talbot Rice, *Byzantine Painting at Trebizond* (London, 1936), 77–88, 100–6, plates 4r-9) and the small church to the north of Hagia Sophia, of which now only the foundations survive, but which was tantalisingly said in 1850 by Finlay, *Journals*, 300, to contain paintings that were 'wonderful [sic] well preserved' are both later additions to Manuel I's original foundation and so fall outside the scope of this study. D. Talbot Rice, *Hagia Sophia*, 40–41, argues that the small church must be older than Hagia Sophia on the grounds that it is more primitive and less elaborate than the larger church. He also compares the form (especially of the semi-circular apses) to the ninth-century church of St Anne. However, it is clear that it is a small Greek-cross domed church, which would suggest a later date since all the surviving domes on churches in the city postdate 1204 (and semi-circular apses can be found on churches which post-date Hagia Sophia, as at the now destroyed Zeytinlik Camii [see S. Ballance, 'The Byzantine Churches at Trebizond', *AnatStud* 10 (1960), 164; Bryer, Winfield, *Pontos*, 245]). It is more likely that this chapel is a later monastic building (as is suggested by R. Cormack, 'Recent Studies in Byzantine and Early Christian Art', *Burlington Magazine* 116 (1974), 277; and Bryer, Winfield, *Pontos*, 233). Other later foundations were found on either side of the south porch.

4. Of the surviving churches linked to the Laskarids by H.W. Buchwald, 'Lascarid Architecture' *JOB* 28 (1979), 261–96, none is longer than 20 m. However, the need for impressive new churches was lessened by the existence of major imperial churches in Nicaea, although not around Nymphaion. It is worth noting that the location of the most important new foundation, that of the imperial mausoleum in the monastery of Christ Saviour (Sosandra) on Mt. Sipylus near Magnesia, is still unknown.

5. Qintsvisi measures 24.5 x 13 m and Pitareti is 15 x 16.4 m. In general see the comparative groundplans in A. Alpagu-Novello, V. Beridze, J. Lafontaine-Dosogne, *Art and Architecture of Medieval Georgia* (Louvain La Neuve, Milan, 1980), 307. In Armenia, churches are built to a similar scale to those in Georgia;

- see the plans in P. Donabédian, J.-M. Thierry, *Les Arts Arméniens* (Paris, 1987), *passim*. The Panagia Paregoretissa in Arta, built between 1270 and 1290, measures c. 25 x 20m.
6. Studenica is c. 23 x 9 m, and Sopocani is c. 23 x 13 m.
 7. S. Bossilkov, *Turnovo: Its history and art heritage* (Sofia, 1960), pis. 22–26; St. Bojadziev, 'L'église des Quarante-Martyrs à Târnovo', *Études Balkaniques* (1971) issue 3, 143–58.
 8. The katholikon here measures 29.5 x 19 m, and the complex of churches as a whole 29.5 x 45.5 m.
 9. C. Mango, *Byzantine Architecture* (London, 1976), 166.
 10. Areas of the exterior were refaced either in 1881 or by the city authorities at the time of the Russell Trust expedition. In a few places brick was used as a supplement.
 11. See J.M. Rogers, *EI2* 8: 966 [s.v. Saldjwkids VI.2]. It is also a feature of Islamic architecture in Syria, see R. Hillenbrand, *Islamic Architecture: Form, Function and Meaning* (Edinburgh, 1994), pl. 6, Fig. 261. An analogy can be found in the decorative stonework of some Armenian churches, such as the gavit of the church of the Holy Apostles in Ani: P. Cuneo, A. Zarian, G. Uluhogian, J.-M. Thierry, N. Thierry, *Ani*, DDAA: 12 (Milan, 1984), pl. 44.
 12. Ballance, 'The Byzantine Churches at Trebizond', 154–5; Bryer, Winfield, *Pontos*, 218–19.
 13. *Haghia Sophia*, 38–40.
 14. *Haghia Sophia*, 39 and [Figs 1 and 2](#) record two flights of five narrow steps leading to the north porch, although no remains could be found at the west or south porches. Texier observed in 1832 that 'on all sides there are steps leading to the church' [C. Texier, R.P. Pulían, *Byzantine architecture illustrated by a series of the earliest Christian edifices in the East* (London, 1864), 199].
 15. *Haghia Sophia*, 156–60.
 16. G. Millet, 'Les monastères et les églises de Trébizonde', *BCH* 19 (1895), 428–33.
 17. Finlay, *Journals*, 301. This location depends on the identification of Finlay's entrance with the south porch. The prominence and location of this porch opposite the entrance to the complex support this identification. Mid-nineteenth-century drawings show that the south porch was still open at this time (for example, C. Texier, R.P. Pulían, *Byzantine architecture illustrated by a series of the earliest Christian edifices in the East* (London, 1864), pl. LXa). It is most likely that the porch was only blocked during the Turkish restoration of the 1880s (*Haghia Sophia*, 5–6). Despite this Talbot Rice, *Haghia Sophia*, 116, locates the donor image on the west wall of the church.
 18. This issue is complicated by the existence of later tombs, which were excavated in the narthex. Talbot Rice, *Haghia Sophia*, 6, suggests that they may be victims of a cholera outbreak in c. 1900, when the church was turned into a hospital.
 19. N. Brounov, 'La Sainte-Sophie de Trébizonde', *Byz* 4 (1927–28), 393–405. As Ballance, *Haghia Sophia*, 10, points out, there is no evidence to support this reconstruction.
 20. A. Alpago-Novello, V. Beridze, J. Lafontaine-Dosogne, *Art and Architecture of Medieval Georgia* (Louvain La Neuve, Milan, 1980), 302, plans 1, 2 and 4.

21. *Haghia Sophia*, 37–38. The publication of these excavations is, unfortunately, incomplete and inadequately documented.
22. Talbot Rice, *Haghia Sophia*, 50, also cites Rus as a possible model, but politically, temporally, and geographically it is much more remote than Georgia.
23. There is still no study of the evolution, decoration and function of porches and ambulatories in Georgian architecture. Decorated porches can be found at, among, others, Betania (296–9), Tsinarekhi (311–15), Gelati (328–31), Iqalto (345–8), Kvatakhevi (369–73), Jvari, Mtskheta (386–91), Samtavro, Mtskheta (392–4), Pitareti (420), Metekhi, Tbilisi (448–50), Timotesubani (452–3), Tsunda (455–7); (the page numbers are individual references to Alpagò-Novello et al., *Art and Architecture*, with further bibliography).
24. In both these cases the topography of the setting required the main entrance to be on the north side of the church. Both churches also show signs of alterations under Muslim rule, when the placing of the mihrab on the south side of the church entailed blocking in any doors there and removing any evidence of porches.
25. L. Rcheulishvili, *Kupovnaia arkhitektura VIII-X vekov v Abkhazii* (Tbilisi, 1988), 6–19 [Bzyb’], 36–45 [Likhni]. Although in neither case are the porches bonded on to the main church, Rcheulishvili (p.41) argues that they are integral to the designs of the churches (although Alpagò-Novello et al., *Art*, 375, suggest that the porches may be later additions, but without argumentation). Bzyb’ is also interesting as it has polygonal exteriors to its three apses and flared masonry in the lowest courses around the apse. However, the temptation to link this church to Hagia Sophia must be resisted until more concrete evidence of links can be found.
26. L.G. Khroushkova, ‘Le Palais Médiéval au Village de Lixni en Abkhazie (d’Après les Données des Fouilles)’, *ByzF* 25 (1999), 153–63; G.A. Dzidzaria, *Likhni* (Suxumi, 1987) was unavailable to me.
27. V. Beridze, *Tbilisis metekhis tadzari* [The church of Metekhi in Tbilisi] (Tbilisi, 1969), 12–13 (with French summary); for images see R. Mepisashvili, V. Zinzadze, R. Schrade, *Georgien. Wehrbauten und Kirchen* (Leipzig, 1986), 307 (Pitareti); 331 (Metekhi).
28. It is the openness of the porches that also rules out comparisons with the gavit of Armenian churches in this period. These hall-like additions to the west of many Armenian churches were often as large as the churches themselves, but their enclosed form gave them great flexibility for a variety of functions, including scriptoria etc. The porches at Trebizond could not have performed such functions.
29. Rainfall levels in Trebizond are now 150–200 cm or more per annum.
30. During the Russell Trust restorations, this south wall was rebuilt and a copy of the north door was placed in it.
31. In general on the function of annex rooms see G. Babic, *Les chapelles annexes des églises byzantines. Fonction liturgique et programmes iconographiques*, Bibliothèque de Cahiers Archéologiques: 3 (Paris, 1969). J. Lafontaine-Dosogne, ‘Remarques sur le programme décoratif de Sainte-Sophie à Trébizonde’, *ByzBulg* 7 (1981), 380–81, has suggested (without supporting evidence) that the room may have had a funerary function.
32. *Haghia Sophia*, 8–36.

33. The partially doric columns at St Eugenios are both built up of masonry (Ballance, 'The Byzantine Churches at Trebizond', 157). All the other monolithic columns in the city are considerably smaller in scale, such as those used in the porch and north gallery at the Panagia Chrysokephalos.
34. All spolia that have been recorded are listed building by building in Bryer, Winfield, *Pontos*, 204–47. All are on a relatively small scale.
35. The exact provenance of this capital is unknown: G. Mendel, *Catalogue des sculptures grecques, romaines et byzantines [du musées impériaux ottomans]* 3 (Constantinople, 1914), 463–4 (No.1239); R. Kautzsch, *Kapitellstudien. Beiträge zu einer Geschichte des spätantiken Kapitells im Osten von vierten bis ins siebten Jahrhundert* (Berlin, Leipzig, 1936), pl. 40, no. 667.
36. R.M. Harrison, *Excavations at Saraçhane in Istanbul 1, The Excavations, Structures, Architectural Decoration, Small Finds, Coins, Bones, and Molluscs* (Princeton, 1986), 5.c.i. (pl. 151); 3.b.i. (pl. 130).
37. Such a date is preferable to that given in *Haghia Sophia*, 45–6, of the eighth century (p.16 provides an even vaguer dating: anything up to the thirteenth century).
38. A variety of interpretations of *spolia* are explored by B. Brenk, 'Spolia from Constantine to Charlemagne: aesthetics versus ideology', *DOP* 41 (1987), 103–10. Comparable evidence for the use of *spolia* in the thirteenth century can be found in Ivan II Asen's foundation of the Forty Martyrs at Trnovo: Bossilkov, *Turnovo*, pl. 23.
39. On the church of St Anne: Bryer, Winfield, *Pontos*, 218–19. The same is possibly true of the church of St Eugenios if the two doric columns are those brought in by Basil II in 1022: see Lazaropoulos, *Synopsis*, 256.
40. Bryer, Winfield, *Pontos*, 238.
41. O. Demus, *The Church of San Marco in Venice: History, Architecture, Sculpture*, *Dumbarton Oaks Studies*: 6 (Washington DC, 1960), 29, 113; F.W. Deichmann, 'I pilastri acritani', *Rendiconti Atti della Pontificia Accademia Romana di Archeologia* 50 (1980), 75–89 (repr. in *Rom, Ravenna, Konstantinopel, Naher Osten (Gesammelte Studien zur spätantiken Architektur, Kunst und Geschichte)* (Wiesbaden, 1992), Study XXIX). The proof that the columns are of Constantinopolitan origin has been thought to supplant the Venetian chronicle account of their capture from the Genoese in Acre in 1258. However, if the Hagia Sophia columns are from Constantinople, then the Venetian chronicle tradition may not be so erroneous. The arrival of Constantinopolitan columns in Trebizond in the mid-thirteenth century suggests that materials were being exported to the east as well as to the west during the years of the Latin empire. (In the case of the *pilastri acritani*, then, maybe they were exported to Acre, only to be re-exported again soon after.)
42. On trade with the empire of Trebizond see the excellent S.P. Karpov, *L'Impero di Trebisonda, Venezia, Genova e Roma, 1204—1461. Rapporti politici, diplomatici e commerciali* (Rome, 1986).
43. P. Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection* 5, part 1, *Michael VIII to Constantine XI, 1258–1453* (Washington DC, 1999), 33.

Notes to Chapter 3

1. Processions are discussed by M. McCormick, *Eternal Victory. Triumphal rulership in late antiquity, Byzantium, and the early medieval West*, Past and Present Publications (Cambridge, 1986) and A. Berger, 'Imperial and Ecclesiastical Processions in Constantinople', in N. Necipoglu, ed., *Byzantine Constantinople: monuments, topography, and everyday life*, The Medieval Mediterranean: peoples, economies and cultures, 400–1453: 33 (Leiden, Boston, 2001), 73–87.
2. On the development of Constantinople see: C. Mango, *Le développement urbain de Constantinople: IV^e–VII^e siècles* (Paris, 1990); R. Janin, *Constantinople byzantine*, 2nd edn (Paris, 1964).
3. C. Foss, *Nicaea: A Byzantine Capital and Its Praises* (Brookline, MA, 1996), 97–122.
4. Bryer, Winfield, *Pontos*, 198.
5. Panaretos, 78¹³⁻¹⁴. Bryer, Winfield, *Pontos*, 187–95 and 184 where they convincingly argue that this reference must refer to Andronikos Gidon rather than to either Andronikos II (1263–66) or Andronikos III (1330–32).
6. Bryer, Winfield, *Pontos*, 190–5. On the chronology of Nymphaion, I follow H.W. Buchwald, 'Lascarid Architecture', *JOB* 28 (1979), 292, who proposes a date after 1222.
7. O. Lampsides, 'Ho «eis Trapezounta» logos tou Bessarionos', *AP* 39 (1984), 62–63; trans. C. Mango, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire 312–1453* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 1972), 252–3.
8. The inscription was on a reused classical marble block 1.80 m long in *opus sectile* floor: AAEHIOC KOMNENOC. See Bryer, Winfield, *Pontos*, 238 quoting P. Marengo's visit in 1877.
9. Bryer, Winfield, *Pontos*, 239.
10. A.A.M. Bryer, 'Une église «à la demande du client» à Trébizonde', *Proche-Orient Chrétien* 32 (1982), 216–34 (repr. *Peoples and Settlements in Anatolia and the Caucasus* (Variorum, 1988), Study V); Bryer, Winfield, *Pontos*, 238–43; These studies supplant the building history proposed by S. Ballance, 'The Byzantine Churches at Trebizond', *AnatStud* 10 (1960), 146–51.
11. As is recorded in an eleventh-century inscription in the Georgian cathedral at Ishkhani: W. Djobadze, *Early Medieval Georgian Monasteries in Historic Tao, Klarjeti and Sasveti* (Stuttgart, 1992), 209–11.
12. By 1210 David Grand Komnenos had refused to recognise the authority of the Orthodox patriarch resident in Nicaea, preferring his own nominee for the bishopric of Amastris. This is recorded in letter 17 of John Apokaukos, V.G. Vasilievski, ed., 'Epirotica saeculi XIII. iz perepiski Ioanna Navpaktskago', *VizVrem* 3 (1896), 275; A.A.M. Bryer, 'David Komnenos and Saint Eleutherios', *AP* 42 (1988–89), 180.
13. Z. Skhirtladze, 'The Mother of All the Churches. Remarks on the Iconographie Programme of the Apse Decoration of Dört Kilise', *CahArch* 43 (1995), 101–16; Djobadze, *Early Medieval Georgian Monasteries*, 158–66.
14. Lazaropoulos, *Synopsis*, 324; A.G.C Sawides, 'The Trapezuntine Sources of the Seljuk Attack on Trebizond in AD 1222–1223', *AP* 43 (1990–91), 102–30.
15. Panaretos, 65²⁶⁻⁷.

16. Lazaropoulos, *Synopsis*, 256. Lazaropoulos also states that Basil II's church was domed.
17. For a full list of known burial sites see Bryer, Winfield, *Pontos*, 239, n. 449.
18. For an overview of the monastery see R. Cormack, *Writing in Gold. Byzantine Society and its Icons* (London, 1985), 200–11; R. Ousterhout, 'Architecture, Art and Komnenian Ideology at the Pantokrator Monastery', in Necipoglu, *Byzantine Constantinople*, 133–50.
19. *Byzantine Monastic Foundation Documents, A Complete Translation of the Surviving Founder's Typika and Testaments*, eds. J. Thomas, A.C. Hero (Washington DC, 2001) 3: 725–81; E.A. Congdon, 'Imperial Commemoration and Ritual in the *Typikon* of the Monastery of Christ Pantokrator', *REB* 54 (1996), 161–99.
20. Interestingly, as at the Pantokrator, later generations did not appreciate the plans of the church's founders. Andronikos Komnenos chose to be buried away from the Pantokrator (although in the end his body was never to be buried at all), and later Grand Komnenoi reverted to the Chrysokephalos and its surroundings, for their burial.
21. For references see H.W. Buchwald, 'Lascarid Architecture', *JOB* 28 (1979), 263; E.A. Iveson, 'Looking for the Lascarids: The Tomb of the Emperor Theodore II Lascaris and the Imperial Monastery of Sosandra at Nymphaeum', *BSCA* 23 (1997), 6.
22. In Serbia, royal burial churches were built at Studenica (c.1198, extended 1233/4) and Sopocani (c. 1260): M. Kusanin, V. Korac, D. Tasic, M. Sakota, *Studenica* (Belgrade, 1968), V.J. Djuric, *Sopocani* (Leipzig, 1967). In Georgia, the great twelfth-century royal church at Gelati, near Kutaisi, was extended with new work on the south chapel and narthex in the mid-thirteenth century: R. Mepisashvili, *Arkitekturnyi ansambl' Gelati* (Tbilisi, 1966). In Bulgaria, the probable burial place of the Tsars was the church of the Forty Martyrs in Trnovo, built in 1230 (where St Sava of Serbia was initially buried). According to L. Alishan, *Sissouan ou L'Arméno-Cilicie* (Venice, 1899), 266–8, the rulers of Armenian Cilicia were mostly buried at the monastery of Trazarg at Sis. I am grateful to Helen C. Evans for this final reference.
23. On chancery documents and archaic Constantinopolitan practices see N. Oikonomides, 'The Chancery of the Grand Komnenoi: Imperial Tradition and Political Reality', *AP* 35 (1979), 299–332.
24. This location for the *tzykanisterion*, to the west of the citadel, is suggested by Finlay, *Journals*, 297–9, and supported by Bryer, Winfield, *Pontos*, 201–2.
25. 'Tsesi da gangebai mepet kurtkhevisa' in I. Dolidze, ed., *Kartuli samartlis dzegelebi* [Monuments of Georgian Law] vol. 2 (Tbilisi 1965), 50–4; trans. A. Eastmond, *Royal Imagery in Medieval Georgia* (University Park, PA, 1998), 239–44: 'The rule and order of the blessing of kings'.
26. Lazaropoulos, *Synopsis*, 320, 330, 332. This record was, of course, written some 140 years after the event that it describes. Its accuracy cannot, therefore, be taken for granted. However, the details are not important here: what matters is the evidence for imperial processions around the city, and the perception in the fourteenth-century that they were important in the early thirteenth century. The implication is that processions were still integral in the time of Lazaropoulos.
27. Lazaropoulos, *Synopsis*, 330. Rosenqvist translates this simply as 'the imperial way of the Romans'.

28. G. Martin, R. Predelli, eds., *Diplomatarium Veneto-Levantinum* (New York, 1966), II: 128. Streets in Trebizond are discussed in Bryer, Winfield, *Pontos*, 201, who note that this road is also known as the 'vie Maitamu'.
29. Lazaropoulos, *Synopsis*, 314.
30. Lampsides, 'Ho «eis Trapezounta» logos tou Bessarionos', 62.
31. A.A.M. Bryer, 'Some Trapezuntine Monastic Obits, 1368–1563', *REB* 34 (1976), 132–3 (repr: *The Empire of Trebizond and the Pontos* (Aldershot, 1980), Study IX). Bryer, Winfield, *Pontos*, 213–14 follow Chrysanthos, 463, in identifying the Stylos monastery with the rock-cut monastery of Manglavita. If this is correct then it indicates the creation of even longer processional routes, as this monastery is located further from the city: 1km inland to the west of Hagia Sophia.
32. Panaretos, 7528–29; Bryer, Winfield, *Pontos*, 198.
33. P. Gautier, 'Le typikon du Christ Sauveur Pantocrator', *REB* 32 (1974), 81.884–83.900.
34. See, for example, Choniates, 18–19, 567.
35. Choniates, 382.
36. W. Tronzo, *The Cultures of His Kingdom. Roger II and the Cappella Palatina in Palermo* (Princeton, 1997), 55; O. Demus, *The Mosaics of Norman Sicily* (London, 1948), 43.
37. On the Constantinopolitan nature of the Hodegetria, see Rosenqvist's commentary on Lazaropoulos's *Synopsis*, 450; G. Babic, 'Les images byzantines et leurs degrés de signification: l'exemple de l'Hodigitria', in J. Durand, ed., *Byzance et les images, Louvre conférences et colloques* (Paris, 1994), 189–222, esp. 198–207; for an example of the export of the specifically Constantinopolitan cult of the Hodegetria in the late thirteenth century see M. Achimastou-Potamianou, 'The Byzantine Wall Paintings of Vlacherna Monastery (Area of Arta)', in *Actes du XVe congrès internationale d'études byzantines* IIA (Athens, 1981), 1–14, esp. 4.
38. Thessaloniki: Eustathios of Thessaloniki, *The Capture of Thessaloniki*, ed. S. Kyriakidis, trans. J.R. Melville Jones, *Byzantina Australiensia*: 8 (Canberra, 1988), 142. Antioch: Choniates, 31 (the visit of John II Komnenos in 1138).
39. R.L. Wolff, 'Footnote to an incident of the Latin Occupation of Constantinople: The Church and the Icon of the Hodegetria', *Traditio* 6 (1948), 319–28.
40. Pachymeres, 11.31.
41. J. Durand, 'La Vraie Croix de la princesse Palatine au trésor de Notre-Dame de Paris: Observations techniques', *CahArch* 40 (1992), 139–46; J. Durand, ed., *Byzance, L'art byzantin dans les collections publiques françaises* (Paris, 1992), 444–5. For the later importance of the cross in the definition of Polish royal power see E. Dabrowska-Zawadzka, 'La relique de la Vraie croix appartenant à Manuel Comnène', *Bulletin de la Société nationale des Antiquaires de France* (1987), 91–110 and M. Derwich, 'Le baiser de paix utilisé lors du couronnement des rois de Pologne et déposé au Trésor de Notre-Dame de Paris. Considérations sur l'importance des croix et des reliques pour le couronnement des rois de Pologne', *Cahiers de Civilisation Médiévales* 38 (1995), 337–44.
42. A. Frolow, *La relique de la vraie croix. Recherches sur le développement d'un culte*, *Archives de l'orient chrétien*: 7 (Paris, 1961), 483–4 (No. 661).
43. Frolow, *La relique*, 73–80.

44. The role played by relics and icons in the legitimization of power has been examined by I. Kalavrezou, 'Helping Hands for the Empire: Imperial Ceremonies and the Cult of Relics at the Byzantine Court', in H. Maguire, ed., *Byzantine Court Culture from 829 to 1204* (Washington DC, 1997), 53–80. She notes the supreme importance of the True Cross (n. 7), but does not examine it here.
45. The most famous example is that contained in the Limbourg Staurotheke, taken by Heinrich von Ülm in 1207; see J. Rauch, 'Die Limburger Staurothek', *Das Münster* 8 (1955), 201–40. Another relic of the True Cross, taken by the Venetian doge, was instrumental in the saving of the Treasury of San Marco in the fire of 1231; and was commemorated in a relief carving over the entrance to the Treasury soon afterwards: O. Demus, *The Mosaics of San Marco in Venice* 2 (Chicago and London, 1984), 66, pl. 101; Frolov, *La relique*, 296–7 (No. 273); 424 (No. 523). In England and France other relics of the Passion were celebrated: the Crown of Thorns, for which the Sainte Chapelle was built by Louis IX in 1248; and the Blood of Christ which was led into the newly rebuilt Westminster Abbey by Henry III in 1247. These were all placed at the heart of royal ceremonial in a way very similar to that seen in Constantinople.
46. Frolov, *La relique*, 382–3 (No. 451), 414–15 (No. 505).
47. Frolov, *La relique*, 396–7 (No. 471). On the staurotheke see D. Buckton, ed., *The Treasury of San Marco, Venice* (Milan, 1984), 244–51 (No. 34). The inscription reads + CONDIDIT OC SINGNVM GERARDI DEXTERA DINGNUM + QVOD IVSSIT MONDVS REX FRANCVS DVXQVE SECONDVS + GRECORVM DICTVS HENRICVS VT OC BENEDICTVS + BELLO SECVRVS SEMPER MANEAT QVASI MVRVS. AMEN +
48. Frolov, *La relique*, 353 (No. 390: Studenica), 415–16 (No. 508: Zica), 443 (No. 570: Sopocani).
49. Frolov, *La relique*, 416 (No. 509: Chilandari), 432–3 (No. 540: Elia de' Coppi). This latter ivory staurotheke, now in Cortona, is normally dated to the reign of Nikephoros II Phokas (963–9; see A. Cutler, *The Hand of the Master: craftsmanship, ivory and society in Byzantium (9th–11th centuries)* (Princeton, 1994), 213 for references). This indicates that the emperors in Nicaea had managed to remove much of the imperial treasury with them when they fled into exile in 1204.
50. For introductions to the family and their cultural politics see J.M. Rogers, 'The Mxargrdzelis between East and West', *BK* 34 (1976), 315–25 [also printed in G. Ieni, ed., *Atti del primo simposio internazionale sull'arte georgiana* (Milan, 1977), 259–72]; A. Eastmond, '“Local” saints, art and regional identity in the Orthodox world after the Fourth Crusade', *Speculum* 78/3 (2003), 707–49. The court case is recounted by Stepanos Orbelean, *Histoire de la Siounie par Stéphannos Orbélian*, trans. M.F. Brosset (St Petersburg, 1864–66), 201–3.
51. Contrast this with Venice, which demanded such relics as sureties on loans, and then sold them when the loans were defaulted. A. Eastmond, 'Byzantine Identity and relics of the True Cross in the thirteenth century', in A. Lidov, ed., *Eastern Christian Relics* (Moscow, 2003), 205–16.

Notes to Chapter 4

1. In general see A. Grabar, *Sculptures byzantines de Constantinople* vol 1: *Ive-Xe siècle* (Paris, 1963); O. Demus, *The Church of San Marco in Venice: History*,

35. *Architecture, Sculpture*, Dumbarton Oaks Studies: 6 (Washington DC, 1960), Figs. 35–7, 40. See also H.C. Evans, W.D. Wixom, eds., *The Glory of Byzantium. Art and Culture of the Middle Byzantine Era, A.D. 843–1261* (New York, 1997), 45–7.
2. J. Durand, ed., *Byzance, L'art byzantin dans les collections publiques françaises* (Paris, 1992), 433–4.
3. H. Maguire, 'The Cage of Crosses: Ancient and Medieval Sculptures on the 'Little Metropolis' in Athens', in *Thymiamata ste mneme tes Laskarinas Boura* (Athens, 1994), 169–72 [reprint in his *Rhetoric, Nature and Magic in Byzantine Art* (Aldershot, 1998), Study IX].
4. C. Foss, 'Late Antique and Byzantine Ankara', *DOP* 31 (1977), 27–87, esp. 74; for more examples and analysis see L. James, '“Pray Not to Fall into Temptation and Be on Your Guard”: Pagan Statues in Christian Constantinople', *Gesta* 35 (1996), 16.
5. C. Mango, *Byzantine Architecture* (Milan, 1976), 166.
6. This unusual alliance of evangelist and symbol matches that used in the paintings on the pendentives of the church. The allotment of evangelists and their symbols is investigated by R.S. Nelson, *The Iconography of Preface and Miniature in the Byzantine Gospel Book* (University Park PA, 1980), 15–53, 109–14.
7. Talbot Rice, *Hagia Sophia*, 50, suggests that the stone in this part of the church may have been refaced in the nineteenth century. But even if this were the case, there is still no room for all three other evangelist symbols.
8. For a comparison for the centaur see S. Radojčić, 'Der Kentaure-Bogenschütze in der Serbischen Plastik des späten 12. Jahrhunderts' *Sýdost-Forschungen* 22 (1963), 184–91. I am grateful to Zaga Gavrilovic for bringing this reference to my attention.
9. Compare that on the east façade of the eleventh-century Georgian church of Samtavisi: G. Sokhashvili, *Samtavisi. Masalebi tadzris istoriisavis* [Samtavisi. Materials on the history of the monument] (Tbilisi, 1973), plates 1 and 13.
10. Talbot Rice, *Hagia Sophia*, 50.
11. L. Komaroff, S. Carboni, eds., *The Legacy of Genghis Khan: Courtly Art and Culture in Western Asia, 1256–1353* (New York, 2002), Fig. 238; see also the examples in E. Baer, *Islamic Ornament* (Edinburgh, 1998), 104–6.
12. For example, the Panagia Gorgoepeikoos, Athens: Maguire, 'The Cage of Crosses'.
13. The churches of Iuriev Pol'ski, Suzdal and Vladimir contain a wide and disparate range of carvings on their façades. These are roughly contemporary with the carvings at Trebizond, but it is impossible to link the two in any more than a general way as the style and execution of the carvings in Rus, as well as the motifs used and their layout are all different: G.K. Vagner, *Skul'ptura drevnei Rusi XII vek, Vladimir, Bogolubovo*, (Moscow, 1969); G.K. Vagner, *Belokamennaia rez'ba drevnogo Suzdalia*, (Moscow, 1975).
14. N.A. Aladashvili, *Monumental'naia skul'ptura Gruzii* (Moscow, 1977).
15. A fuller discussion of this frieze and its interpretation can be found in A. Eastmond, 'Narratives of the Fall: Structure and Meaning in the Genesis Frieze at Hagia Sophia, Trebizond', *DOP* 53 (1999), 219–36.
16. G. Millet, 'Les monastères et les églises de Trébizonde,' *BCH* 19 (1895), 457, first proposed that it showed the *Birth of Cain*; but M. Alpatov, 'Les reliefs de la Sainte-Sophie de Trébizonde', *Byz* 4 (1927–28), 412, suggested that it showed

17. On this gesture see H. Maguire, 'The Depiction of Sorrow in Middle Byzantine Art/ *DOP* 31 (1977), 123–74, esp. 132–51.
18. I am grateful to David Winfield for bringing this to my attention.
19. *Triodion* (Rome, 1879), 100; trans. K. Ware, Mother Maria, *The Lenten Triodion* (London, 1978), 168. My reading of the inscriptions is taken from its recording by Millet, 'Les monastères et les églises de Trébizonde/ 447, n. 2. (citing only *Triodion*, p. 58a).
20. In other words, this phrase was recited on the Saturday evening – the liturgical beginning of the Sunday of Forgiveness: *Triodion*, 100; trans. Ware, Mother Maria, *The Lenten Triodion*, 168.
21. *Triodion*, 155; trans. Ware, Mother Maria, *The Lenten Triodion*, 254.
22. John Chrysostom's *Homilies on Genesis*, which examine the meaning of all these events, were read out during Lent: *PG* 53, 164.
23. Lazaropoulos, *Synopsis*, 334–6. See discussion in Bryer, Winfield, *Pontos*, 232–3. Interestingly, this was the same as the patronal feast at the Pantokrator in Constantinople: Pseudo-Kodinos, *Traité des Offices*, ed. J. Verpeaux (Paris, 1966), 245.
24. For a model of how this functioned in Byzantium: A. Papalexandrou, 'Text in context: eloquent monuments and the Byzantine beholder', *Word & Image* 17 (2001), 259–83.
25. For one example, see A. Alpago-Novello, V. Beridze, J. Lafontaine-Dosogne, *Art and Architecture of Medieval Georgia* (Louvain La Neuve, Milan, 1980), Fig. 435 (Svetitskhoveli in Mtskheta).
26. A. Ulrich, *Kain und Abel in der Kunst* (Bamberg, 1981). Most other surviving Creation cycles come as part of larger cycles of images from Genesis: See, for example, F. Ouspensky, L. 'Octateuque de la bibliothèque du Sérail à Constantinople (Sofia, 1907), [plate IX, Figs 23–7](#); D.C. Hesseling, *Miniatures de l'Octateuque grec de Smyrne (Manuscrit de l'école évangélique de Smyrne)* (Leyden, 1909), [Figs 1–24](#); C. Hahn, 'The Creation of the Cosmos: Genesis Illustration in the Octateuchs/ *CahArch* 28, (1979), 29–40. Or E. Kitzinger, *J mosaici del periodo normanno in Sicilia, 2: La Cappella Palatina di Palermo. I mosaici delle Navate* (Palermo, 1993), 26, [Figs 39, 44–46, 49–50](#). O. Demus, *The Mosaics of San Marco in Venice 2* (Chicago/London, 1984), 117–18, Figs 134–43.
27. A. Goldschmidt and K. Weitzmann, *Die byzantinischen Elfenbeinskulpturen des X.-XIII. Jahrhunderts. Erster Band: Kästen* (Berlin, 1930), Nos 67–81, 86, 87. A. Cutler, 'On Byzantine Boxes/ *Journal of the Walters Art Gallery* 42–3 (1984–85), 32–43; Durand, *Byzance*, 261–2 (No. 170).
28. The problem is that it is not possible to determine the exact function of the ivory caskets. Evans, Wixom, eds., *The Glory of Byzantium*, 222, 234, classify them as luxury, secular objects, probably designed as wedding gifts. This is based on the decoration of the Darmstadt casket, which includes a further figure with a moneybag, identified as Ο Ο ΠΛΟΥΤΟΣ (Wealth), who acts as a reminder of the transience of good fortune. H. Maguire has recently expanded this idea in 'Magic and Money in the Early Middle Ages/ *Speculum* 72 (1997), 1037–54, esp. 1047–50. He suggests that the scenes are antithetical, and that the protection of wealth is assured through penance, as modelled by Adam and Eve. If correct, this context is very different from that at Trebizond.

29. See J.B. Glenthoj, *Cain and Abel in Syriac and Greek Writers (4th-6th Centuries)* (unpublished D.Phil, Oxford, 1991), 41–47, who quotes examples such as Clement of Alexandria and Irenaeus, as well as other early Christian and Gnostic writers. In Cosmas Indicopleustes, *Topographie Chrétienne* [Sources Chrétiennes 159], ed. & trans. W. Wolska-Conus (Paris, 1970), book V.75, Abel is described as a type of Christ, and in the Vatican copy (Vat. gr. 699, fol. 55r) he is depicted as a shepherd: C. Stornajolo, *Le miniature della Topografia Christiana di Cosma Indicopleuste. Codice Vaticano Greco 699* (Milan, 1908), 33, plate 18.
30. On this subject see Graef, *Mary*; and S. Benko, *The Virgin Goddess. Studies in the pagan and Christian roots of Mariology* (Leiden, New York, Cologne, 1993), 234–45.
31. On Marian typology see S. Der Nersessian, ‘The Program and Iconography of the Frescoes of the Parecclesion/ in *Kariye Djami* 4, 303–49, esp. 310–13. Images of Job and the *Hospitality of Abraham* also survive in the north porch. These have typological meanings, but are generally associated with Christ rather than Mary.
32. Evans, Wixom, *The Glory of Byzantium*, 372.
33. Talbot Rice, *Haghia Sophia*, Fig. 115.
34. S. Der Nersessian, ‘The Program and Iconography of the Frescoes of the Parecclesion’, in *Kariye Djami*, 4: 303–49; P. Miljkovic-Peppek, *Deloto na zografite Mikhailo i Eutikhij* (Skopje, 1967), 43–51.
35. This interest in Marian typology can also be used to link the Grand Komnenoi to the Bagratid rulers of Georgia, as one earlier cycle of such wall paintings is known, from the royal Georgian monastery of Betania, south-west of Tbilisi: A. Eastmond, *Royal Imagery in Medieval Georgia*, (University Park, PA, 1998), 154–69; E. Privalova, ‘Betaniis mokhatuloba’ [The paintings of Betania], *Sabchota Khelovneba [Soviet Art]* (1980), part 8, 55–62. This perhaps hints at residual links between the two states, but the lack of any precise stylistic or iconographie parallels means that it can only be used tentatively as evidence.
36. Alpatov, ‘Les reliefs de la Sainte-Sophie/ 415–18.
37. *Triodion*, 134; trans. Ware, Mother Maria, *The Lenten Triodion*, 168–9.
38. Alpatov, ‘Les reliefs de la Sainte-Sophie/ 412, saw the frieze as a literal depiction of Genesis.
39. H. Schade, ‘Adam und Eve/ in E. Kirschbaum, ed., *Lexikon der christlichen Ikonographie* 1 (Rome, Freiburg, 1972), col. 44–51. The reversal also occurs in the frescoes of Otranto cathedral: L. Safran, *San Pietro at Otranto. Byzantine Art in South Italy*, (Rome, 1992), 110. Alpatov notes a further example of this phenomenon in the Novgorod Bible (a reference copied by Talbot Rice, *Haghia Sophia*, 48). Alpatov cites this manuscript as *Moscow, Synodal Library 1147*, but I have been unable to find any other reference to it, and Alpatov gives no photograph.
40. H.R. Broderick, ‘A Note on the Garments of Paradise/ *Byzantion* 55 (1985), 250–4. Pre-lapsarian garments are discussed by John Chrysostom, PG 53, 125.
41. G.A. Anderson, M.E. Stone, *A Synopsis of the Books of Adam and Eve*, (Atlanta, Georgia, 1994), 46: ‘At that hour I learned with my own eyes that I was naked of the glory with which I had been clothed.’ See also, J. Issavardens trans., *The Uncanonical Writings of the Old Testament found in the Armenian Manuscripts of the Library of St. Lazarus, Venice* (Venice, 1901), 21, 22, 41, 44.
42. Bryer, Winfield, *Pontos*, 193, pl. 130a.

43. Bryer, Winfield, *Pontos*, 193, pl. 130b, suggest that the two reliefs may be associated, but this cannot be demonstrated.
44. G. Galavaris, *The Illustrations of the Liturgical Homilies of Gregory Nazianzenus*, *Studies in Manuscript Illumination*: 6 (Princeton, NJ, 1969), 14–15, 140–2.
45. However, two of the images are missing; see Galavaris, *Liturgical Homilies*, 109–13.
46. Galavaris, *Liturgical Homilies*, 118–20. This is the only copy of the Liturgical Homilies in which the Nativity and Fall are combined. For a concordance of all the images accompanying the liturgical homilies see *ibid.* 14–17. The interpretation of the first of the Genesis scenes in this miniature is disputed. H. Omont, *Miniatures des plus anciens manuscrits grecs de la Bibliothèque Nationale du Vie au XI^e siècle* (Paris, 1929), 57, thought that it represented the *Creation of Eve*, but Galavaris, *Liturgical Homilies*, 118–19, disputed this, although he conceded that the scene may be a conflation of the *Quickening of Adam* and the *Creation of Eve*. The image appears to show Adam lying rigid on the ground and Christ, standing over him, bending over to pull Adam up by his left hand. Christ makes a gesture of blessing with his right hand. It does not seem, therefore, directly to show the *Creation of Eve*, although the iconographie pose is very similar to images of this scene.
47. Gregory Nazianzos, Homily 38, in *Grégoire de Nazianze: Discours 38–41*, ed. & trans. C. Moreschini, P. Gallay, *Sources Chrétiennes*: 358 (Paris, 1990), 104–48.
48. Gregory Nazianzos, Homily 38₁₆.
49. On the importance of external inscriptions and their use in processions see Papalexandrou, ‘Text in context’, 259–83.
50. See, for example the *Vita Basilii* [*Theophanes Continuatus*, ed. I. Bekker, CSHB (Bonn, 1838) V, section 86]; trans. C. Mango, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire 312–1453* (Englewood Cliffs NJ, 1972; reprint Toronto, 1986), 195.
51. Choniates, 578, 592; these sections of Choniates’ history are infused with Old Testament ideas and quotations. For Theodore’s *Selention*: Niketas Choniates, *Orationes et Epistolae*, ed. J.L. van Dieten (Berlin, New York, 1972), 128; trans. F. Grabler, *Kaisertaten und Menschenschicksale* (Graz, Vienna, Cologne, 1972), 218–19. Angold, *Byzantine government in exile*, 29, provides further examples.
52. Choniates, 593.
53. M. Sacopoulo, *Asinou en 1106 et sa contribution à l’iconographie*, *Bibliothèque de Byzantion*: 2 (Brussels, 1966), 112.
54. For thirteenth-century Armenian tympana sculptures, see P. Donabédian, J.-M. Thierry, *Les Arts Arméniens* (Paris, 1987), Figs 335–46. Figurative sculpture in Georgia is less common after the eleventh century, see Aladashvili, *Monumental’naia skul’ptura Gruzii*.
55. Donabédian, Thierry, *Les Arts Arméniens*, pl. 86, Fig. 715.
56. The reliefs are described in P. Cuneo, A. Zarian, G. Uluhogian, J.-M. Thierry, N. Thierry, *Ani*, DDAA: 12 (Milan, 1984), 91 as deriving from twelfth-century Byzantine art, but this is implausible given the wealth of local examples.
57. The church inscription was published by N.I. Marr, ‘Nadpis Epifaniia, katalikosa Gruzii (iz raskopok v Ani 1910 g.)/ *IIAN* 4 (1910), 1433–12.
58. Anderson, Stone, *A Synopsis of the Books of Adam and Eve*.

59. Qur'an, trans. M. Pickthall, (London, 1992), Sura VII, 22, 27; al-Tabari, *Ta'arikh al-rusul wa'l-muluk [The History of al-Tabari]* 1, *General Introduction and From the Creation to the Flood*, trans. F. Rosenthal (New York, 1989), 276: 'But by tearing their clothes, Iblis wanted to show them their secret parts, which had been concealed from them.'
60. B. Schmitz, *Islamic and Indian Manuscripts and Paintings in the Pierpont Morgan Library* (New York, 1997), 17, has recently shown that these two figures are not, in fact, Adam and Eve, but rather just two human beings: *Mard va Zan* (Man and Woman). I am grateful to Roger S. Wieck for providing me with this information.
61. Syriac gospel lectionary: J. Leroy, *Les manuscrits syriaques à peintures conservées dans les bibliothèques d'Europe et d'Orient* (Paris, 1964), pl. 86; Evans, Wixom, eds., *The Glory of Byzantium*, 385. al-Hariri: J.M. Bloom, S.S. Blair, *Islamic Arts* (London, 1997), Fig. 103.

Notes to Chapter 5

1. This destruction cannot be dated. It seems more likely that it was done under Byzantine rule, in order to prepare the exterior for painting, as this porch faces the bell tower which was built and painted (both inside and out) in the fifteenth century. It is unlikely to be Muslim Iconoclasm as the survival of crosses on the exterior of the church suggests that the Ottomans were never very concerned about the exterior of Hagia Sophia, even when converted to a mosque.
2. L. Rodley, *Byzantine Art and Architecture. An Introduction* (Cambridge, 1994), 269, describes them as *spolia* from earlier Seljuq buildings, but this hypothesis is incorrect.
3. The small volute base on which the cross stands, the rings at the corners of each arm, and the decoration between the arms are all paralleled in Armenian khatchkars; see L. Azarian, *Armenian Khatchkars* (Lisbon, 1973). The crosses on the church of St Anne, visible in Fig. 21, were only added to the church after 1893: see Bryer, Winfield, *Pontos*, pl. 164. D. Talbot Rice, 'Notice on some religious buildings in the city vilayet of Trebizond', *Byz* 5 (1929–30), 58, dates them to the twelfth or thirteenth century.
4. *Hagia Sophia*, Figs 16, 17, 44–46.
5. *Hagia Sophia*, 55–82.
6. On the battle see C. Cahen, *Pre-Ottoman Turkey* (London, 1968), 135–7; J. Matuz, 'Der Niedergang der anatolischen Seldschuken bei Köseh-Dagh' *Central Asiatic Journal* 17 (1973), 180–99.
7. O. Grabar, 'Islamic Influence on Byzantine Art', *ODB* 2: 1018–19.
8. *Hagia Sophia*, 51.
9. J.M. Rogers, 'Recent Work on Seljuq Anatolia', *Kunst des Orients* 6/2 (1969), 165, describes Talbot Rice's interpretation as unpersuasive but provides no alternative explanation.
10. R. Ettinghausen, 'Hilâl', in *Elz* 3: cols. 381–5.
11. G. Hennequin, *Catalogue des monnaies musulmanes de la bibliothèque nationale. Asie Pré-Mongole: Les Salguqs et leurs successeurs* (Paris, 1985), Nos. 335 (Mas'ud I), 420 (Mahmud), 518 (Badr al-Din Lu'lu'). On the Zangid and Luluid dynasties

see CE. Bosworth, *The New Islamic Dynasties. A chronological and genealogical manual* (Edinburgh, 1996), 121–2.

12. V. Langlois, *Numismatique de l'Arménie au Moyen Age* (Paris, 1855; reprint 1978), pl. 1 no.12: a coin of Hetum I showing him on horseback between a star and a crescent; the reverse of the coin acknowledges the Seljuq sultan, Kay Khusraw II.
13. A. Grabar, 'La décoration architecturale de l'église de la Vierge à Saint-Luc en Phocide, et les débuts des influences islamiques sur l'art byzantin de Grèce' *Comptes Rendus de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* (1971), 15–37; G.C. Miles, 'Byzantium and the Arabs: Relations in Crete and the Aegean Area' *DOP* 18 (1964), 1–32; C. Connor, 'Hosios Loukas as a Victory Church' *GRBS* 33 (1992), 293–308. S.T.D. Spittle, 'Cufie Lettering in Christian Art' *Archaeological Journal* 111 (1954), 138–52, provides further examples but dismisses the work as purely 'decorative'.
14. For examples from Hosios Loukas and the Cappella Palatina in Palermo see Miles, 'Byzantium and the Arabs', plates 54–7; also on a Georgian icon at St Catherine's, Mount Sinai: D. K'ldiashvili, 'L'icône de saint Georges du Mont Sinai avec le portrait de Davit Aymasenebeli' *Revue des études géorgiennes et caucasiennes* 5 (1989), 107–28.
15. A. Cutler, 'The Mythological Bowl in the Treasury of San Marco at Venice', in D. Kouymjian, ed., *Near Eastern Numismatics, Iconography, Epigraphy and History. Studies in Honor of George C. Miles* (Beirut, 1974), 235–54.
16. Pachymeres, VI. 12. Discussion in W. Tronzo, *The Cultures of His Kingdom. Roger II and the Cappella Palatina in Palermo* (Princeton, 1997), 138–9.
17. See A. Zarian, A. Manoukian, *Haghartzin*, DDAA 13 (Milan, 1984), pl. 14.
18. S. Amiranashvili, *Khakhul'skii Triptikh*, Monuments of Georgian Art: 1 (Tbilisi, 1972), pl. 99, 100.
19. J.M. Rogers, 'The Çifte Minare Medrese at Erzurum and the Gök Medrese at Sivas. A Contribution to the History of Style in the Seljuq Architecture of 13th Century Turkey', *AnatStud* 15 (1965), 63–87; J.M. Rogers, 'The date of the Çifte Minare Medrese at Erzurum', *Kunst des Orients* 8, part 1/2 (1972), 77–119.
20. S.R. Azarian, *Portaly v monumental'noi arkhitekture Armenii IV-XIV vv* (Erevan, 1987), pl. 25 and 87. Located in the province of Artsakh, the main church in this monastery was constructed by Vardan, son of prince Bazaz in 1204/5. The interior also contains extensive foliate and geometric ornament in the pendentives and drum of the dome. See P. Donabédian, J-M. Thierry, *Les Arts Arméniens* (Paris, 1987), Fig. 774.
21. R.O. Shmerling, *Kartuli khurotmodzghvruli ornamenti* [Georgian Architectural Ornament] (Tbilisi, 1954), 76.
22. D. Talbot Rice, *Islamic Art* (London, 1975), Fig. 166; A. Ertug, *The Seljuks. A Journey Through Anatolian Architecture* (Istanbul, 1991), [Figs 47](#) and [56](#); T. Talbot Rice, *The Seljuqs in Asia Minor* (London, 1961), [Fig. 39](#).
23. The two templon screen panels, now in the State Museum of Fine Arts in Tbilisi, are unstudied, but appear in R.O. Shmerling, *Malyeformy v arkhitekture srednevekovoi Gruzii* (Tbilisi, 1962), p. 192 and pl. 80.
24. R.O. Shmerling, 'Postroika molaret-uxucesa caria Georgiia Blistatel'nogo v eel. Daba, bordzhomskogo raiona', *Ars Geórgica* 2 (1948), 111–22, [Figs 11–13](#).
25. Shmerling, *Kartuli khurotmodzghvruli ornamenti*, 96.

26. Azatian, *Portaly*, 83.
27. Talbot Rice, *Islamic Art*, Fig. 166; Ertug, *The Seljuqs*, Figs 47 and 56; Talbot Rice, *The Seljuqs*, Fig. 39.
28. Talbot Rice, *The Seljuqs*, 142, 161.
29. P. Cuneo, A. Zarian, G. Uluhogian, J.-M. Thierry, N. Thierry, *Ani*, DDAA: 12 (Milan, 1984), 95–6.
30. F. Sarre, *Erzeugnisse Islamischer Kunst II: Seldschukische Kleinkunst* (Leipzig, 1909). Talbot Rice, *The Seljuqs*, 257.
31. See, for example, the decoration and design of the turbe of 1314 in Khachim-Dorlatli: L.S. Bretanitskii, *Zodchestvo Azerbaidzhana XII-XV vv. i ego mesto v arkhitekture Perednogo Vostoka* (Moscow, 1966), 188–95.
32. See, for example, the Noravank at Amaghu: Donabédian, Thierry, *Arts Arméniens*, 478–9, pl. 99–102.
33. ‘Anatolian’ is the term employed by Rogers, ‘Recent Work on Seljuq Anatolia’.
34. J. Trilling, ‘Medieval Interlace Ornament: The Making of a Cross-Cultural Idiom’, *Arte Médiévale* 9/2 (1995), 59–86; E. Baer, *Islamic Ornament* (Edinburgh, 1998).
35. Ibn al-Athir, ‘al-Kamel fi al-Tawarikh’, *RHCHO* 2, part 1 (Paris, 1887), 102. Similarly, the son of Muhammed b. Saltuq II of Erzurum had offered to convert to Christianity to marry queen Tamar in c. 1190: *KTs* 11:43, trans. Vivian, 115–16; CE. Bosworth, *The New Islamic Dynasties. A chronological and genealogical manual* (Edinburgh, 1996), 218.
36. T.S.R. Boase, ed., *The Cilician Kingdom of Armenia* (Edinburgh, 1978), 25.
37. On this see H.C. Evans, ‘Imperial aspirations: Armenian Cilicia and Byzantium in the thirteenth century’ in A. Eastmond, ed., *Eastern Approaches to Byzantium*, SPBS: 9 (Aldershot, 2001), 243–56.
38. M. Kursanskis, ‘Relations matrimoniales entre Grands Comnènes de Trébizonde et princes géorgiens’, *BK* 34 (1976), 112–27.
39. M. Kursanskis, ‘L’Empire de Trébizonde et les Turcs au 13e siècle’, *REB* 46 (1988), 109–24.
40. Ala al-Din Ata-Malik Juvaini, *The History of the World-Conqueror*, ed. M.M. Qazvini, trans. J.A. Boyle (Manchester, 1958), 1,257.1 follow the interpretation of A.A.M. Bryer, ‘The Grand Komnenos and the Great Khan at Karakorum in 1246’, in R. Curiel, R. Gyselen, eds., *Itinéraires d’Orient. Hommages à Claude Cahen*, *Res Orientales*: 6 (Bures-sur-Yvette, 1994), 257–61.
41. See A. Eastmond, ‘Art and Identity in the Thirteenth-Century Caucasus’, in *Art and identity*, G.E. von Grunebaum Center for Near Eastern Studies, UCLA, Colloquium Series (Los Angeles, 2000), 3–40, with bibliography.
42. Ivane Mqargrdzeli already held the important title of *msakhurtukhutsesi*. According to *KTs* II, 110; trans. Vivian, 141, he asked queen Tamar to: ‘bestow a new high honour on me and award me the title of *atabeg*, as is the custom with the sultans, for according to the law of the sultans, the *atabeg* is considered to be the father and tutor of kings and sultans and for this reason is called *atabeg*’.
43. Stepanos Orbelean, *Histoire de la Siounie*, ed. and trans. M.F. Brosset (St Petersburg, 1864), 201–3.
44. Abulfeda, ‘Annales d’Abu’l-Fédâ’, in, *RHCHO* 1 (Paris, 1872), 85–6.

45. The history of Tamta has been pieced together by M.F. Brosset, *Histoire de la Géorgie depuis l'antiquité jusqu'en 1469 de J.-C* (St Petersburg, 1849), 500, 505, 520; and idem., *Additions et éclaircissements à l'Histoire de la Géorgie* (St Petersburg, 1851), 266–79, 429. See also Rogers, 'Mxargrdzelis', 265.
46. I.A. Orbeli, 'Hasan Djalal kniaz' khachenskii', *BAN* 3 (1909), 146–74 (reprinted in I.A. Orbeli, *Izbrannye Trudy* (Erevan, 1963), 146–74). For an image of Hasan seated cross-legged in a largely Islamic iconography of power at the monastery he founded at Gandzasar: B. Ulubabian, M. Hasratian, *Gandzasar*, DDAA: 17 (Milan, 1987), [Fig. 26](#).
47. V. Minorsky, 'Caucásica [I] in the history of Mayyafariqin' *BSOAS* 13 (1949), 27–35, esp. 33–4.
48. On trade in Anatolia in general see H. Manandian, *The Trade and Cities of Armenia in Relation to Ancient World Trade*, trans. N. Garsoïan (Lisbon, 1965), 136–202.
49. S.P. Karpov, *L'Impero di Trebisonda, Venezia, Genova e Roma, 1204–1461. Rapporti politici, diplomatici e commerciali* (Rome, 1986), 26–69.
50. Rogers, 'The Mxargrdzelis between East and West', 268–72.
51. M.F. Hendy, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection* 4, part 2: *The Emperors of Nicaea and their Contemporaries (1204–1261)*, Dumbarton Oaks Catalogues (Washington DC, 1999), 36. M. Kursanskis, 'The coinage of Grand Komnenos Manuel I', *AP* 35 (1978–79), 23–37; F. Pegolotti, *La Pratica della Mercatura*, ed. A. Evans (Cambridge MA, 1936; reprint: New York, 1970), 29, repeated almost verbatim on 31: 'Il peso e la misura di Torisi [Tabriz] è tutt'uno con quello di Trabisonda'; A.A.M. Bryer, 'The Fate of George Komnenos, Ruler of Trebizond (1266–1280)', *BZ* 66 (1973), 339.
52. D. Pingree, 'Gregory Chioniadēs and Palaeologan Astronomy', *DOP* 18 (1964), 133–60, esp. 141; on astronomy under the Ilkhans: L. Komaroff, S. Carboni, eds., *The Legacy of Genghis Khan: Courtly Art and Culture in Western Asia, 1256–1353* (New York, 2002), 20, 26, 108.
53. On the Mengüjekids see C.E. Bosworth, *The New Islamic Dynasties. A chronological and genealogical manual* (Edinburgh, 1996), 127, with bibliography. On links between them and the Gabras family, see C. Cahen, 'Une famille byzantine au service des Seldjoukides d'Asie Mineure', in *Polychronicon. Festschrift Franz Dölger* (Heidelberg, 1966), 145–59; A.A.M. Bryer, 'A Byzantine Family: The Gabrades, c. 979–c. 1653', *University of Birmingham Historical Journal* 12 (1970), 164–87; reprinted in *The Empire of Trebizond and the Pontos* (Aldershot, 1980), Study Ilia.
54. Talbot Rice, *The Seljuqs in Asia Minor*, 263 ([Fig. 39](#)).
55. On the inscriptions see A. Gabriel, *Monuments turcs d'Anatolie* (Paris, 1934), 2: 174–88; M. van Berchem, H. Edhem, *Corpus inscriptionum arabicum, Asie Mineure* (unknown, 1895), 3: 73–82 (nos 41–49). On the Çifte Minare Medreses in Erzurum and Sivas: Rogers, 'The Mxargrdzelis between East and West', 260; Rogers, 'Recent Work on Seljuq Anatolia', 103–6.
56. Rogers, 'The Mxargrdzelis', 267; *RBK* II, s.v. Dvin.
57. The other obvious example of a combination of styles is the Cappella Palatina in Palermo, although this is always subject to special pleading. For the latest arguments see W. Tronzo, *The Cultures of His Kingdom. Roger II and the Cappella Palatina in Palermo* (Princeton, 1997).

58. Nikolaos Mesarites, *Die Palastrevolution des Johannes Komnenos*, ed. A. Heisenberg (Würzburg, 1907), 43–4; trans. C. Mango, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire 312–1453* (Englewood Cliffs NJ, 1972; reprint: Toronto, 1986), 228–9.
59. P. Magdalino, *The Empire of Manuel I Komnenos* (Cambridge, 1993), 118.
60. L.-A. Hunt, ‘Comnenian Aristocratic Palace Decorations: Descriptions and Islamic Connections’, in M. Angold, ed., *The Byzantine Aristocracy IX–XIII Centuries*, B.A.R. International Series: 221 (Oxford, 1984), 138–57.
61. Angold, *Byzantine government in exile*, 112–17.
62. For manuscript examples see: R.S. Nelson, J. Lowden, ‘The Palaeologina Group. Additional Manuscripts and New Questions’, *DOP* 45 (1991), 59–78; esp. Fig. 13 and p. 65 [re. BL Add MS22748 fol. 78]; H. Buchthal, H. Belting, *Patronage in thirteenth-century Constantinople. An atelier of late Byzantine book illumination and calligraphy*, Dumbarton Oaks Studies: 16 (Washington DC, 1978), plates 45b, 60c. For dress see the turbans worn by many figures in the early thirteenth-century copy of the *Romance of Barlaam and Ioasaph* (Athos, Iviron, Cod. 463), which is presumed to have been commissioned within the Latin empire (A.A. Karakatsanis, ed., *Treasures of Mount Athos* (Thessaloniki, 1997), 240); or that of Theodore Metochites in the Kariye Camii (*Kariye Djami*, frontispiece).
63. For silks as signifiers of the international fellowship of kings, see R. Cormack, ‘But is it art?’, in J. Shephard, S. Franklin, eds., *Byzantine Diplomacy*, SPBS: 1 (Aldershot, 1992), 218–36.
64. R. Shukurov, ‘Turkoman and Byzantine self-identity. Some reflections on the logic of title-making in twelfth- and thirteenth-century Anatolia’, in A. Eastmond, ed., *Eastern Approaches to Byzantium*, SPBS: 9 (Aldershot, 2001), 259–76.

Notes to Chapter 6

1. *Haghia Sophia*, vii, claimed only a desire to provoke new interest and debate in thirteenth-century Byzantine painting; see also D. Winfield, ‘The British Institute of Archaeology and Byzantine Wall Paintings in Turkey: An Unfinished Chapter’, in R. Matthews, ed., *Ancient Anatolia. Fifty Years’ Work by the British Institute of Archaeology at Ankara* (Ankara, 1998), 339–46. The only work to have been published on the church since then is J. Lafontaine-Dosogne, ‘Remarques sur le programme décoratif de Sainte-Sophie à Trébizonde’, *ByzBulg* 7 (1981), 379–91.
2. The majority of scenes are described in *Haghia Sophia*, 88–184. Despite its inaccuracies, readers are advised to consult this work for fuller descriptions of individual paintings. Further references to *Haghia Sophia* will only be made in this chapter where I significantly disagree with its conclusions.
3. It is possible that inscriptions could also have been painted on the three other arches beneath the dome; no plaster fragments now survive from any of these to indicate how they originally appeared.
4. These letters cannot follow on from the text of Psalm 92, since this ends at verse 5.
5. C. Diehl, *L’église et les mosaïques du couvent de Saint-Luc en Phocide*, Bibliothèque des Écoles Françaises d’Athènes et de Rome: 55 (Paris, 1889), 71. Psalm 46.51: ‘God is in the midst of her ...’ is used in a similar way to explain the incarnation at Hagia Sophia, Kiev: O. Powstenko, *The Cathedral of St Sophia in Kiev*, The

6. On the cult of the Theotokos see now M. Vassilaki, ed., *Mother of God. Representations of the Virgin in Byzantine Art* (Athens, 2000).
7. Lafontaine-Dosogne, 'Remarques sur le programme décoratif, 385–9; J. Lafontaine-Dosogne, *Iconographie de l'enfance de la vierge dans l'empire byzantin et en occident 1* (Brussels, 19642). She notes only one unusual scene, that of the *Reproach of Juthine*, but this must remain tentative, based as it is only on fragments of painted surface.
8. *Haghia Sophia*, 112 (note that this version includes a number of errors).
9. *Haghia Sophia*, 111–12, 192.
10. Psalm 101.20–22 appears in Serbia in the church of the Virgin at Pec, c. 1330, and in the monastery of Treskavac (mid fifteenth-century layer). I am very grateful to Zaga Gavrilovic for bringing Pec to my attention. The first part of Psalm 101.20 also appears at Daphni, but here it is used in conjunction with Psalm 32.14, and the combination results in a very different text: M. Herbert, *Daphni: A Guide to the Mosaics and their Inscriptions* (Chichester, 1978), 29.
11. For the arguments about the identity of the patron see E. Privalova, *Rospis' Timotesubani* (Tbilisi, 1980), 112–24. The link between Shalva and the Trebizond expedition is based solely on the unusual appearance of St Eugenios of Trebizond among the saints on the west wall of the church; *ibid.*, 121.
12. Privalova, *Timotesubani*, 37–8.189 n.66 notes the alternative reading of Habbakuk 3.3 as 'south' rather than 'Teman'.
13. The inscriptions at Vardzia and Qintsvisi are unpublished.
14. Psalm 113.3 appears around the conch of the apse: Z. Skhirtladze, *Rospis' peshchernogo khrama v Bertubani. Issledovanie po istorii gruzinskoi monumental'noi zhivopisi nachala XIII v.* (Tbilisi, 1987), 12.
15. Psalm 104.19 appears on the west arch beneath the dome (the other three arches have lost any possible inscriptions they once had): A.M. Lidov, *The Mural Paintings of Akhtala* (Moscow, 1991), 25.
16. Privalova, *Timotesubani*, 189 n. 63 provides additional examples.
17. It is perhaps also possible to ascribe political interpretations to this corpus of texts, since the inscriptions were commissioned when Georgia was at the peak of its power, and its frontiers were expanding in every direction: A. Eastmond, *Royal Imagery in Medieval Georgia* (University Park PA, 1998), 179.
18. Choniates, 578, 592; these sections of Choniates' history are infused with Old Testament ideas and quotations. For Theodore's *Selention*: Niketas Choniates, *Orationes et Epistulae*, ed. J.L. van Dieten (Berlin, New York, 1972), 128; trans. F. Grabler, *Kaisertaten und Menschenschicksale* (Graz, Vienna, Cologne, 1972), 218–19. Angold, *Byzantine government in exile*, 29, provides further examples.
19. For Constantinople as the new Sion see *Michael Akominatou tou Choniatou: Ta Sozomena*, ed. S. Lampros (Athens, 1879; reprint Groningen, 1968), I: 354.
20. Z. Gavrilovic, 'Between Latins and Greeks: Some Artistic Trends in Medieval Serbia (13th-14th Centuries)', *Nottingham Medieval Studies* 33, (1989), 110–24 [reprint in *Studies in Byzantine and Serbian Medieval Art* (London, 2001), Study VIII], Fig. 8.

21. The image may be linked to a second image which appears next to it on the west wall. This too has a haloed figure and an angel and does not appear to fit in to the main cycle of miracle images that otherwise dominate this room. However, its poor state of preservation means that it can no longer be identified.
22. ODB 1: 584.
23. Gavrilovic, 'Between Latins and Greeks', 119; G. Suboric, *Art of Kosovo. The Sacred Land* (New York, 1997), 32.
24. A similar model of font and image of the Baptism is seen at Gracanica: S. Curcic, 'The original baptismal font of Gracanica and its iconographie setting', *Zbornik Narodnog Muzeja* IX-X (1979), 313–23. Also compare the identical location of the Baptism in the *lite* of the Panagia Mavriotissa at Kastoria: S. Pelekanides, M. Chatzidakis, *Kastoria* (Athens, 1985), 79, Fig. 14.
25. For a brief overview: G. Galavaris, *The Illustrations of the Prefaces in Byzantine Gospels*, Byzantina Vindobonensia: 11 (Vienna, 1979), 108.
26. P. Magdalino, *The Empire of Manuel I Komnenos* (Cambridge, 1993), 434–7; I. Kalavrezou, 'Imperial Relations with the Church in the Art of the Komnenians', in N. Oikonomides, ed., *Byzantium in the 12th Century. Canon Law, State and Society* (Athens, 1991), 32.
27. See E. Kitzinger, 'On The Portrait of Roger II in the Martorana in Palermo' *Proporzione* 3 (1950), 30–35 (Reprinted in E. Kitzinger, *Art of Byzantium and the Medieval West*, ed. W.E. Kleinbauer (Bloomington Indiana, 1976), XI, 320–6; an attempt to extend this idea for the rest of Byzantium has been made by R. Cormack, 'Interpreting the Mosaics of S. Sophia at Istanbul', *ArtH* 4 (1981), 144–5.
28. The interpretation of these figures is complicated by the fact that *Haghia Sophia*, 94–5, reads an inscription in the third medallion as ὁ ἀ[γίος] Διον[ύσιος], but this is no longer visible. It is impossible to reconcile the Old Testament, Jewish dress of the figure with his identification as a Christian saint. *Haghia Sophia*, contains a number of other mis-readings, notably on p. 117, where a saint on the north wall of the church is named as St Eugenios. The surviving inscription is in fact ὁ ἀ[γίος] Εὐσι...
29. B. Zivkovic, *Sopocani. Tsrtezhi freska*, Spomenitsi: Srpskog slikarstva srednjeg veka: 3 (Belgrade, 1984), 23.
30. Monreale: O. Demus, *The Mosaics of Norman Sicily* (London, 1948), 114, 115–16; E. Borsook, *Messages in Mosaic. The Royal Programmes of Norman Sicily (1130–1187)* (Oxford, 1990), 59, 64; Theotokos Peribleptos: C. Grozdanov, *Church of St Kliment Ohrid* (Zagreb, 1988), pl. 2.
31. P.A. Underwood, ed., *The Kariye Djami*, Bollingen Series: 70 (New York, 1966), 1: 54–5, nos. 68–71.
32. Both are mentioned in the *stichera* of the Ancestors, sung at Vespers on the Sunday of the Ancestors: *Menaion* for December, ed. M. Saliberos (Athens, 1904), 112.
33. Fallmerayer, *OF* 1: 125.
34. O. Lampsides, ed., 'Ho «eis Trapezounta» logos tou Bessarionos', *AP* 39 (1984), 3–75; trans. C Mango, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire 312–1453* (Englewood Cliffs NJ, 1972, reprint: Toronto, 1986), 253.
35. T. Papamastorakis, 'A visual encomium of Michael VIII Palaeologos: The external

- wall paintings of the Mavriotissa at Kastoria' *Deltion des Christianikes Archaeologikes Hetaireias* 15 (1989–90), 221–40.
36. S. Curcic, 'The Nemanjic family tree in the light of the ancestral cult in the Church of Joachim and Anna at Studenica', *Zbornik Radova Vizantoloskog Instituta* 14–15 (1973), 191–6.
 37. *Haghia Sophia*, 104–6; 94.
 38. D. Ioselidze, *Rospis' Achi. Pamiatnik gruzinskoj monumental'noi zhivopisi kontsa XIII veka* (Tbilisi, 1989), 29–32, [Fig. 8](#), pl. 48–9. The worshipping angels beneath the figure of Christ Pantokrator in the dome of Hagia Sophia are also copied at Achi, where they appear beneath the Deesis in the apse. Otherwise the copying process was very selective and no other scenes from Hagia Sophia were copied; most of the remaining wall space at Achi is given over to a cycle of scenes from the life of St George.
 39. The *Incredulity of Thomas* appears to the south of the apse at Sopocani, but here it forms part of a larger Passion cycle which begins in the naos and continues in the vault of the bema. Zivkovic, *Sopocani*, 14–15.
 40. Lafontaine-Dosogne, 'Remarques sur le programme décoratif, 383; G. Millet, *L'iconographie de l'évangile* (Paris, 1916), 38–40.
 41. For comparative examples from Hosios Loukas and Daphni see E. Diez, O. Demus, *Byzantine Mosaics in Greece. Hosios Lucas and Daphni* (Cambridge Mass, 1931), pl. 10 (Hosios Loukas), pl. 104 (Daphni); from Monreale, E. Kitzinger, / *mosaici del periodo normanno in Sicilia* 4 (Palermo, 1994), pl. 146; from Sopocani: V.J. Djuric, *Sopocani* (Leipzig, 1967), pl. 26.
 42. Monreale: Kitzinger, / *mosaici* 4, pl. 155. Pskov: W. Tronzo, 'Byzantine Court Culture from the Point of View of Norman Sicily: The Case of the Cappella Palatina in Palermo', in H. Maguire, ed., *Byzantine Court Culture from 829 to 1204* (Washington DC, 1997), pl. 7; Patmos: A.K. Orlandos, *He arkhitektoniki kai ai byzantinai toikhografiai tes mones tou Theologou Patmou* (Athens, 1970), pl. 17, 70; A.D. Kominis, *Patmos. Die Schätze des Klosters* (Athens, 1988), 94 (pl. 30).
 43. G. Downey, 'Nikolaos Mesarites: Description of the Church of the Holy Apostles at Constantinople', *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* 47/6 (1957), sections xxxv–xxxvi.
 44. H. Maguire, 'Truth and Convention in Byzantine Descriptions of Works of Art', *DOP* 28 (1974), 124–5.
 45. The dangers of trying to read archaeological evidence from ekphraseis have been well explored by L. James, R. Webb, 'To Understand Ultimate Things and Enter Secret Places: Ekphrasis and Art in Byzantium', *ArtH* 14 (1991), 1–17.
 46. R. Hamann-MacLean, 'Der berliner Codex Graecus Quarto 66 und seine nächsten Verwandten als Beispiele des Stilwandels im frühen 13. Jahrhundert', in F. Dettweiler, ed., *Studien zur Buchmalerei und Goldschmiedkunst des Mittelalters. Festschrift für K.H. Usener zum 60. Geburtstag* (Marburg, Lahn, 1967), 225–50.
 47. Patmos: Orlandos, *Patmou*, pl. 86; Kominis, *Patmos*, 52 (pl. 21); Timotesubani: Privalova, *Rospis' Timotesubani*, 41–4.
 48. A.W. Carr, 'Court Culture and Cult Icons in Middle Byzantine Constantinople', in H. Maguire, ed., *Byzantine Court Culture from 829 to 1204* (Washington DC, 1997), 85.
 49. G. Galavaris, *The Illustrations of the Prefaces in Byzantine Gospels*, Byzantina

Vindobonensia: 11 (Vienna, 1979), Figs 80 and 81.

50. Talbot Rice, *Haghia Sophia*, 154 declined to identify these images; although the schémas prepared by June Winfield (but never published) do reproduce the details with great accuracy. I am very grateful to June Winfield for sharing her drawings with me.
51. The most famous example is in the ninth-century copy of the Homilies of Gregory Nazianzos (Paris BN, gr. 510, fol. 426v): L. Brubaker, *Vision and Meaning. Image as Exegesis in the Homilies of Gregory of Nazianzos* (Cambridge, 1999), Fig. 42, and discussion 243–5. Brubaker did not know of the images of baptism at Trebizond. She notes the occurrence of this image in the ninth-tenth centuries, at a time of expansion: see A. Grabar, *L'iconoclasme byzantin. Dossier archéologique* (Paris, 1957), 224.
52. Downey, 'Nikolaos Mesarites', sections xix-xxi. A substantial portion of the text is missing at this point, and only three of the apostles are mentioned. However, it is almost certain that all twelve must originally have been depicted. O. Demus, *The Mosaics of San Marco in Venice* (Chicago and London, 1984), 1: 242–3, discusses the possible arrangement of scenes in the Holy Apostles, and argues against them including images of baptism. His argument is based on a perception of the space available in the church and is by no means conclusive. A. Heisenberg, *Grabeskirche und Apostelkirche. Zwei Basiliken Konstantins. Untersuchungen zur Kunst und Literatur des ausgehenden Altertums 2: Die Apostelkirche in Konstantinopel* (Leipzig, 1908), 152, represents the opposing view.
53. D. Pincus, 'Andrea Dandolo (1343–1354) and Visible History: The San Marco Projects', in C.M. Rosenberg, ed., *Art and Politics in Late Medieval and Early Renaissance Italy: 1250–1500* (Notre Dame & London, 1990), 191–206; T. Verdón, 'Il battistero: arte e teologia', in C. Bertelli, ed., *La Basilica di San Marco: Arte e Simbologia* (Venice, 1993), 73–88.
54. For an overview of the relationship between San Marco and the Holy Apostles see O. Demus, *The Church of San Marco in Venice: History, Architecture, Sculpture*, *Dumbarton Oaks Studies*: 6 (Washington DC, 1960), 88–100.
55. Subotic, *Art of Kosovo*, 28–9.
56. R. Krautheimer, 'Introduction to an "iconography of mediaeval architecture"', *JWCI* 5 (1942), 1–33.
57. Djuric, *Sopocani*.
58. K. Mikeladze, 'Davit narinis egvteris mokhatuloba' [The paintings of Davit Narin's Chapel], *Literatura da Khelovneba* 1999/2, 101–21. The mausoleum of the Bulgarian Tsars is unknown. It is possible that the church of the Forty Martyrs at Trnovo of 1230 was built for that purpose (certainly St Sava of Serbia was temporarily buried there). Later Boiana (1259) may also have had royal burials.
59. F. Dvornik, *The Idea of Apostolicity in Byzantium and the Legend of the Apostle Andrew*, *Dumbarton Oaks Studies*: 4 (Cambridge Mass, 1958), 138–80; the link between Andrew and Trebizond is confirmed (albeit in a negative way) in *KTs* I, 39; trans. Thomson, 355–6.
60. Anna Komnena, *Alexiad*, XIV.8.8., ed. and trans. B. Leib (Paris, 1945), III: 181.21–25.
61. Kirakos Gandzakeci, 'Histoire de l'Arménie par le vartabed Kirakos de Gantzac', trans. M.F. Brosset, *Deux historiens arméniens: Kiracos de Gantzac, XIIIe siècle, Histoire d'Arménie; Oukhtanès d'Ourha, Xe siècle, Histoire en trois parties* (St

Petersburg, 1870–71), 83–88.

62. S. Der Nersessian, 'The Kingdom of Cilician Armenia', in K. Setton, ed., *A History of the Crusades 2 The Later Crusades: 1189–1311*, eds. R.L. Wolff, H.W. Hazard (Madison, Milwaukee, London, 1969), 630–59; P. Jackson trans., *The Mission of Friar William of Rusbruck. His journey to the court of the Great Khan Möngke, 1253–55*, The Hakluyt Society: Series II, 173 (London, 1990), introduction.
63. K. Weitzmann, M. Bernabé, *The Byzantine Octateuchs*, The Illustrations in the Manuscripts of the Septuagint II: Octateuch (Princeton, 1999), 696–8, 727–9, 972r–80, 1123–5, 1153–1249, 1288–1301, 1413–14, 1476–8.
64. Panaretos, 61. The dearth of information about Manuel I makes it very hard to identify any particular battle that this image may commemorate.
65. Mango, *Art of the Byzantine Empire*, 48, 109–10, 117–18, 197–8, 227–8.
66. N. Oikonomides, 'Pictorial propaganda in XIth c. Constantinople', in *Glas CCCXC de l'Académie serbe des sciences et des arts. Classe des sciences historiques* 11 (Belgrade, 2001), 93–102; Magdalino, *The Empire of Manuel I Komnenos*, 472, 474.
67. *Manuelis Philae carmina*, ed E. Miller (Paris, 1855–7) 240, no. 237. It is discussed in H. Belting, C. Mango, D. Mouriki, *The Mosaics and Frescoes of St Mary Pammakaristos (Fethiye Camii) at Istanbul*, Dumbarton Oaks Studies: 15 (Washington DC, 1978), 12–13.
68. Pachymeres VI.33.
69. R. Macrides, 'The New Constantine and the New Constantinople – 1261?', *BMGS* 6 (1980), 13–41.
70. Lampsides, 'Ho «eis Trapezounta» logos tou Bessarionos', 3–75; trans. Mango, *Art of the Byzantine Empire*, 252–3.

Notes to Chapter 7

1. *Haghia Sophia*, 241–2; C. Mango, *Byzantine Architecture* (London, 1976), 166; L. Rodley, *Byzantine Art and Architecture. An Introduction* (Cambridge, 1994), 269.
2. For an investigation of the development of art and liturgy in the apses of Byzantine churches, see S.E.J. Gerstel, *Beholding the Sacred Mysteries. Programs of the Byzantine Sanctuary*, CAA Monographs on the Fine Arts: 56 (Seattle, 1999).
3. See H. Belting, 'An image and its function in the liturgy: the Man of Sorrows in Byzantium', *DOP* 34–35 (1980–81), 1–16; S. Dufrenne, 'Images du décor de la Prothèse', *REB* 26 (1968), 297–310.
4. S. Der Nersessian, 'The Program and Iconography of the Frescoes of the Parecclesion', in *Kariye Djami* 4: 303–49.
5. The *Tree of Jesse* which appears at Sopocani includes some préfigurations within its foliage: B. Zivkovic, *Sopocani. Tsrtezhi freska*, Spomenitsi Srpskog slikarstva srednjeg veka: 3 (Belgrade, 1984), 26; M.D. Taylor, 'A Historiated Tree of Jesse', *DOP* 34–35 (1980–81), 128; V. Milanovic, 'The Three [sic] of Jesse in the Byzantine Mural Painting of the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries. A Contribution to the Research of the Theme', *Zograf* 20 (1989), 48–60.
6. Byer, Winfield, *Pontos*, 232, argue that the patronal feast of the church was that

of the Transfiguration, which they support with fourteenth-century evidence. My reading of the external sculpture and wall paintings indicates that the church was designed around the Lenten and Easter festivals, and that any link to the Transfiguration must have developed later.

7. These medallion figures were investigated in [chapter 6](#).
8. *Haghia Sophia*, 110–11, 259 n. 12, considers the pairings of evangelists and beasts to be erroneous, but R.S. Nelson, *The Iconography of Preface and Miniature in the Byzantine Gospel Book* (University Park PA, 1980) has shown how much variation there was in the pairings in Byzantium. In the fourteenth century the pairings of Jerome came to be more universally adopted (some manuscripts, such as Venice, Bibl. Marc, gr. 1.14 were even altered to bring them in to line), which suggests that Hagia Sophia was certainly decorated before the western iconographie model took hold.
9. C. Meredith, ‘The Illustrations of Codex Ebnerianus’, *JWCI* 29 (1966), 419–24. She noted that the usual pairing in this group of manuscripts was Matthew and the *Nativity*, Mark and the *Baptism*, Luke and the *Birth of John the Baptist* or the *Annunciation* and John and the *Anastasis*.
10. E. Taq’aishvili, ‘L’évangile de Vani’, *Byz* 10 (1935), 655–63; K. Sharashidze, *Sakartvelos sakhelmtsipo muzeumis khelnatsera aghtseriloba* [Catalogue of Georgian manuscripts in the State Museum of Georgia] 4 (Tbilisi, 1954), 409.
11. J. Myslevic, ‘A propos de quelques ouvrages récents sur l’art de la chrétienté orientale’, *ByzSlav* 30 (1969), 267–9.
12. A.A.M. Bryer, ‘Some Trapezuntine Monastic Obits, 1368–1563’, *REB* 34 (1976), 132; reprint in his *The Empire of Trebizond and the Pontos* (Aldershot, 1980), Study IX.
13. E. Kitzinger, *I mosaici del periodo normanno in Sicilia III: // Duomo di Monreale. I mosaici dell’abside, delta solea e délie cappelle latérale* (Palermo, 1994), Figs 168 and 244.
14. For example: the Hromkla Gospels of 1253: MS FGA 44.17, fols. 8v, 9r [S. Der Nersessian, *Armenian Manuscripts in the Freer Gallery of Art*, Smithsonian Institution Freer Gallery of Art, Oriental Studies: 6 (Washington DC, 1963), [Figs 39](#) and [40](#)]; Poghoskan hermitage Gospels of 1193: MS W.538, fols. 10v–11r, and Toros Roslin’s Gospels of 1262: MS W.538, fols. 7v–8r [both in S. Der Nersessian, *Armenian Manuscripts in the Walters Art Gallery* (Baltimore, 1973), [Figs 31](#) and [32](#), Plate C and [Figs 49](#) and [50](#)]; T.F. Mathews, A.K. Sanjian, *Armenian Gospel Iconography. The Tradition of the Glajor Gospel*, *Dumbarton Oaks Studies*: 29 (Washington DC, 1991), pp. 16–17.
15. The Georgian Vani Gospels has a similar arrangement. The prefatory miniatures have been carefully examined by G. Galavaris, *The Illustrations of the Prefaces in Byzantine Gospels*, *Byzantina Vindobonensia*: 11 (Vienna, 1979); Nelson, *The Iconography of Preface and Miniature*; A.W. Carr, ‘Gospel Frontispieces from the Comnenian Period’, *Gesta* 21/1 (1982), 3–20.
16. See above, [chapter 6](#).
17. *Kariye Djami*, nos. 117, 118.
18. Anna Komnena, *Alexiad*, XV.7.4–7; ed. and trans. B. Leib (Paris, 1945), III: 216.1–4, also makes references to other miracles seen in the narthex at Trebizond: the healing of the Blind man and the curing of the paralytic.
19. Pachymeres II, 369.24–30.

20. *Haghia Sophia*, 185–224. Areas of repainting are fewer than many have argued.
21. *Haghia Sophia*, 243; David Talbot Rice's argument is based largely on the evidence of structural change to the architecture, which I argue was all carried during the building campaign. M. Restle, *Byzantine Wall Painting in Asia Minor* (Shannon, 1968), I: 86, bases his argument partly on the repetition of scenes; which I argue was part of the original programme.
22. Bryer, Winfield, *Pontos*, 285, and personal communication, August 1999. It is possible that thirteenth-century painting survives beneath the whitewash of the Panagia Chrysokephalos and St Eugenios, but neither will be available for study for many years.
23. For an outline of the history of Soumela see Bryer, Winfield, *Pontos*, 254–5.
24. On the monastery see, Bryer, Winfield, *Pontos*, 231. The paintings here are now known only through a few photographs in Restle, *Byzantine Wall Painting*, I: 87–9, III: pl. 523–41, and the discussion in G. Millet, D. Talbot Rice, *Byzantine Painting at Trebizond* (London, 1936), 127–37, pl. 31–41. Restle compares them to Sopocani.
25. A study of Baladan is being prepared for publication by Bryer, to whom I am grateful for a preview. Publication was announced in J.G. Crow, A.A.M. Bryer, 'Survey in Trabzon and Gümüşhane Vilayets, Turkey, 1992–1994', *DOP* 51 (1997), 288 and [Fig. 8](#).
26. Talbot Rice, *Haghia Sophia*, 144, suggests that these images 'have been much repainted'. I could find no evidence to support this: the plaster layers are not different, and the colours and drapery forms match those elsewhere in the church exactly.
27. L. Hadermann-Misguich, *Kurbinovo: Les fresques de Saint-Georges et la peinture byzantine du XIII^e siècle*, Editions de Byzantion (Brussels, 1975), 96–102, pl. 36, 37.
28. *Haghia Sophia*, 239–43. The dating of Sopocani is controversial and has been placed at every period of Stefan Uros's reign.
29. Pec: G. Subotic, *Art of Kosovo. The Sacred Land* (New York, 1997), 28–36; Patmos: E. Kollias, *Patmos* (Athens, 1990), these paintings have been dated to every part of the thirteenth century; for a summary of positions see p. 26.
30. On the Cappadocian churches see C. Jolivet-Lévy, 'Art chrétien en Anatolie turque: le témoignage de peintures inédites à Tatlarin', in A. Eastmond, ed., *Eastern Approaches to Byzantium*, SPBS: 9 (Aldershot, 2001), 133–45; C. Jolivet-Lévy, *Le Cappadoce médiévale* (Paris, 2001), pis 139, 140, 158 (Karşı Kilise) 110, 147 (Tatlarin, church B).
31. For an overview of early Palaiologan painting see D. Mouriki, 'Stylistic trends in monumental painting of Greece at the beginning of the fourteenth century', in *L'art byzantin au début du XIV^e siècle*, Symposium de Gracanica, 1973 (Belgrade, 1978), 55–84.
32. On the style of these paintings see P. Miljkovic-Peppek, *Deloto na zografite Mikhailo i Eutikhij* (Skopje, 1967).
33. *Kariye Djami*, Figs 343, 495 and 549; A. Xyngopoulos, *Hoi toichographies tou Hagiou Nikolaou Orphanou Thessalonikes* (Athens, 1964), [Figs 19, 20](#) and [39](#).
34. On the pilasters on the west wall at Hagia Sophia and on the pillars between the apses are the fragments of two enormous figures: the feet of Christ on the west

wall and a few fragments of the Theotokos to the north of the main apse. Talbot Rice argued that the image of the Theotokos showed her as the Eleousa, in which case this too may have been a more emotional image.

35. On emotion at Nerezi see now I. Sinkevic, *The Church of St Panteleimon at Nerezi. Architecture, programme, patronage* (Wiesbaden, 2000), 51–54; On the *Crucifixion* at Studenica: D. Tasic, *Studenica* (Belgrade, 1968), 76.
36. Annunciation icon: H.C. Evans, W.D. Wixom, eds., *The Glory of Byzantium. Art and Culture of the Middle Byzantine Era, A.D. 843–1261* (New York, 1997), no. 246; Kurbinovo: Hadermann-Misguich, *Kurbinovo*, 96–102, pl. 36, 37.
37. O. Demus, 'The style of the Kariye Djami', in *Kariye Camii* 4: 118–20.
38. Djuric, *Sopocani*, pl. 27; C. Grozdanov, *Church of St Kliment Ohrid* (Zagreb, 1988), pl. 10; O. Demus, *The Mosaics of San Marco in Venice* (Chicago & London, 1984), 2: pl. 67 (3rd Joseph cupola), 73 (Moses cupola).
39. P.A. Underwood, 'Some Problems in Programs and Iconography of Ministry Cycles' in *Kariye Camii* 4: Figs 24 and 25. S. Pelekanides, P. Christou, C. Mauropoulou-Tsioume, S. Kadas, *The Treasures of Mount Athos, Series A: Manuscript Illuminations 2: Iviron, Panteleimon, Esphigmenou, Chilandari* (Athens, 1975), Fig. 13.
40. *Kariye Camii*, no. 117; Kadas, *Treasures of Mount Athos*, 2: Fig. 38.
41. Underwood, 'Some Problems', in *Kariye Camii* 4, Fig. 19. Xyngopoulos, *Hoi toichographies tou Hagiou Nikolaou Orphanou*, 91.
42. The fragments of painting that were revealed in St Eugenios in 1973 are not enough to base conclusions on: Bryer, Winfield, *Pontos*, pl. 169–70.
43. On Qintsvisi and Bertubani: A. Eastmond, *Royal Imagery in Medieval Georgia* (University Park, PA, 1998), 141–54, 169–81; Akhtala: A.M. Lidov, *The Mural Paintings of Akhtala* (Moscow, 1991); J.-M. Thierry, N. Thierry, *L'église Saint-Grégoire de Tigran Honenc à Ani (1215)* (Louvain, Paris, 1993).
44. D. Ioselidze, *Rospis' Achi*, [The paintings of Achi] (Tbilisi, 1989), pl. 12, 13, 48–9.
45. S. Der Nersessian, *Miniature Painting in the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia from the Twelfth to the Fourteenth Century*, *Dumbarton Oaks Studies*: 31 (Washington DC, 1993).
46. K. Mikeladze, 'Davit narinis egvteris mokhatuloba' [The paintings of Davit Narin's Chapel], *Literatura da Khelovneba* 1999/2, 101–21; M. Bulia, 'Davit garejis mokhatulobata ikonograp'iuli programebis taviseburebani (udabnos kharebis eklesia)' [On the iconographie programmes in the painting of Davit Gareja (the Church of the Annunciation at Udabno)], *Literatura da Khelovneba* 1991/ 4, 124–41.
47. S. Amiranashvili, *Damiane* (Tbilisi, 1980); I. Lordkipanidze, *Rospis' v Tsalendzhikha. Khudozhnik kir Manuil Evgenikos i ego mesto v gruzinskoj srednevekovoi monumental'noi zhivopisi* (Tbilisi, 1992).
48. The most important surviving works are the Cross reliquary created for Henry of Flanders by the goldsmith Gerard: D. Buckton ed., *The Treasury of San Marco, Venice* (Milan, 1984), no. 34; and the St Francis cycle in the Kalenderhane Camii. C. Striker, Y.D. Kuban, *Kalenderhane in Istanbul. The buildings, their history, architecture, and decoration* (Mainz, 1997), 140, raise the possibility that the Greek church fathers below the St Francis cycle may have been painted by Greek

artists.

49. A.K. Orlandos, *He Paregoretissa tes Artes* (Athens, 1963). Compare the image from Sopocani in L. James, *Light and Colour in Byzantine Art* (Oxford, 1996), pl. 54.
50. For an introduction to this see G. Tcheishvili, 'Georgian perceptions of Byzantium in the eleventh and twelfth centuries', in A. Eastmond ed., *Eastern Approaches to Byzantium*, SPBS: 9 (Aldershot, 2001), 199–209; and T.S. Qaukhchishvili, 'Grecheskie nadpisi na gruzinskikh freskakh', in G. Ieni ed., *Atti del primo simposio internazionale sull'arte Georgiana* (Milan, 1977), 135–46.
51. See above [chapter 5](#).

Notes to Chapter 8

1. A. Grabar, *L'empereur dans l'art byzantin* (Paris, 1936).
2. Finlay, *Journals*, 301.
3. G. Gagarin[e], *Sobranie vizantiiskikh', gruzinskikh' i drevnerusskikh' ornamentov' i pamiatnikov' arkhitektury* [*Recueil d'ornements et d'architecture byzantines, géorgiens et russes*] (St Petersburg, 1897), pl. 25. He states that the image was covered until 1852, though this is disproved by the evidence of Finlay, who had seen it two years earlier. The portrait seems to have been lost by 1866. Other travellers claimed to see other imperial portraits in the church: Texier, *Architecture*, 199, claimed to see images of Alexios III Grand Komnenos and his court in 1836; and H.F.B. Lynch, *Armenia* (London, 1901), I, 23, saw Alexios I and Manuel I 'above and to the right' of the door. Neither traveller's descriptions of other aspects of Hagia Sophia are wholly reliable, and so these accounts must remain suspect.
4. Some of Gagarin's drawings can be fanciful, but the similarities between this and Finlay's description suggest that its accuracy is reliable.
5. The image must show Manuel I since the inscription describes him as the founder of the monastery, and the earliest graffiti in the church is dated to 1291. Therefore the donor must be a thirteenth-century Manuel, which can only be Manuel I (1238–63).
6. S. Ballance, *Haghia Sophia*, 16–17. Given the number of alterations to the church in the nineteenth century, which led to different entrances, it is impossible to know whether Finlay's description refers to the south or west wall (it could even conceivably refer to the north); but the south wall remains the most likely.
7. Such richly woven robes are seen in Byzantine images, but normally associated with members of the court, rather than the ruler; see for example, Paris, BN Coislin 79, fol. 2. The one exception to this is the image of emperor Alexios V Doukas 'Mourtzouphlas' in a fourteenth-century copy of Niketas Choniates's *Historia* (Vind. Hist. gr. 53, fol. 291v), who wears a *kabbadion* decorated with two large roundels with gryphons surrounded by running beasts. However, this early-fourteenth-century image is not in an imperial context. For discussion see I. Spatharakis, *The Portrait in Byzantine Illuminated Manuscripts* (Leiden, 1976), 152–8, [Fig. 99](#). In the Lincoln Typikon the family of Constantine Palaiologos (the brother of Michael VIII) are also depicted in a variety of *kabbadia* adorned with roundels: Spatharakis, *The Portrait*, 190–206, Figs 143–52. On the international importance of silks see R. Cormack, 'But is it art?', in J. Shephard, S. Franklin, eds., *Byzantine Diplomacy*, SPBS: 1 (Aldershot, 1992), 218–36; A. Muthesius,

'Crossing Traditional Boundaries: grub to glamour in Byzantine silk weaving', *BMGS* 15 (1991), 326–65.

8. For manuscript examples, Spatharakis, *The Portrait*, Figs 46, 47, 62–63, 66, 68; for literary examples P. Magdalino, R.S. Nelson, 'The Emperor in Byzantine Art of the Twelfth Century', *ByzF* 8 (1982), 123–83. Occasionally in manuscripts emperors were depicted in the chlamys or other robes, but in every case these images are supplemented on other pages by an image of the emperor in his imperial loros: for example Alexios I Komnenos in Vat. gr. 666 fols 2r and 2v. Nikephoros III Botaneiates in Paris, BN Coislin 79, fols. 1r to 2v. In both cases, it is when the emperor is in the presence of God that he wears the *loros*: Spatharakis, *The Portrait*, Figs 69–72, 78–80.
9. Akropolites, 15–17. Additionally, John III Vatatzes berated his son, Theodore II, for wearing the imperial robe while out hunting. He saw this as an insult to the symbolism of the robe and to the emperor's subjects: R. Macrides, 'From the Komnenoi to the Palaiologoi: imperial models in decline and exile', in P. Magdalino, ed., *New Constantines: the Rhythm of Imperial Renewal in Byzantium, 4th-13th Centuries*, SPBS: 2 (Aldershot, 1994), 281.
10. Coniates, 332. On this image see A. Eastmond, 'An Intentional Error? Imperial Art and "Mis"-Interpretation under Andronikos I Komnenos', *ArtB* 76 (1994), 502–10.
11. See for example, the ruler images at Zica: M. Kashanin, D. Boshkovic, P. Mijovic, *Zica. Istorija, Arhitektura, Slikarstvo* (Belgrade, 1969), 6, 7, 185, [French & English summaries 203–25], these are fourteenth-century overpaints of the originals of 1220; Mileseva: S. Radojcic, *Mileseva* (Belgrade, 1967), pl. I & III, schema on 83 (which show Stefan the First Crowned and Vladislav wearing the *chlamys*); and Sopocani: V.J. Djuric, *Sopocani* (Leipzig, 1967), 15, 19, 27 (this final image shows the ruler not in imperial dress, but dressed as a monk, as a comparison with his predecessor and companion, St Sava).
12. See the image of Tsar Constantine Asen at Boiana, painted in 1259: A. Grabar, *Boianskata Tsurkva [L'Église de Boïana]*, Khudozhestvenni pametnitsi na Bulgariia: 1 (Sofia, 1924), No. 58, pl. 25, 26; K. Miyatev, *The Boyana murals* (Dresden, Sofia, 1961), pl. 51–3.
13. Pachymeres records a number of images of Michael VIII in Constantinople, including a statue showing the emperor before the archangel Michael. But in neither case is the dress of the emperor described: C. Mango, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire 312–1453* (Englewood Cliffs NJ, 1972; reprint: Toronto, 1986), 245–6.
14. The images and literature are conveniently gathered in P. Miljkovic-Peppek, 'Le portrait de l'empereur byzantin Michel VIII à l'église rupestre de Saint-Érasme près d'Ohrid', *CahArch* 45 (1997), 169–78.
15. H. & H. Buschhausen, *Die Marienkirche von Apollonia in Albanien: Byzantiner, Normannen und Serben im Kampf um die Via Egnatia*, Byzantina Vindobonensia: 8 (Vienna, 1976), 143–82, esp. 146–7, Fig. 16, pl. 101; see R. Macrides, 'The New Constantine and the New Constantinople – 1261?', *BMGS* 6 (1980), 13–41.
16. L. Rodley, *Byzantine Art and Architecture. An Introduction* (Cambridge, 1994), Fig. 228; D. Nicol, *The Despotate of Epiros I* (Oxford, 1957), 197–3.
17. W. Wroth, *Catalogue of the Coins of the Vandals, Ostrogoths and Lombards and of the Empires of Thessalonica, Nicaea and Trebizond in the British Museum* (London, 1911), 236–57, pis. XXXII–XXXV.

18. The chrysobull granted by Alexios III Grand Komnenos to the monastery of Dionysiu on Mount Athos shows the emperor and his empress, Theodora, wearing the Byzantine *loros* (although Alexios's titles, name him as faithful emperor and autocrat of all the east, of the Iberians and of the Transmarine Provinces): Spatharakis, *The Portrait*, 187, Fig. 136; A.A. Karakatsanis, ed., *Treasures of Mount Athos* (Thessaloniki, 1997), 518. Alexios appeared similarly titled and attired in a fresco in the convent of the Panagia Theoskepastos, which was recorded by Texier: C Texier, R.P. Pulian, *Byzantine architecture illustrated by a series of the earliest Christian edifices in the East* (London, 1864), 201–2, pl. 66. Later, Alexios IV and John IV were depicted on the exterior of the bell tower at Hagia Sophia: Bryer, Winfield, *Pontos*, 234–5, Fig. 68.
19. A similar case can, perhaps, be made for Rus as well. Prince Yaroslav Vsevolodovich is depicted wearing a *chlamys* embroidered with eagles in the church of the saviour at Nereditsa, 1246: V. Lazarev, *Old Russian Murals and Mosaics*, (London, 1966), 127–31, Fig. 52, suggests that this picture falls within a Caucasian orbit.
20. On Davit VI Narin: G.V. Alibegashvili, *Svetskii portret v gruzinskoi srednevekovoi monumental'noi zhivopisi* (Tbilisi, 1979), pis. 34, 35. This chapel contains a double portrait of Davit: he appears in Byzantine imperial dress on the west wall, on the south wall, immediately next to this image, he is depicted as a monk. K. Mikeladze, 'The Murals of King Davit Narin Chapel at Gelati Monastery', *BSCA* 25 (1999), 117–18 assumes Palaiologan influence in this image. On Demetre II see G.N. Chubinashvili, *Peshchernye monastyri David-Garedzhi* (Tbilisi, 1948), pl. 91; M. Bulia, 'Samtsirveloebi monasterishi: udabnos kharebis eklesia da misi mokhatuloba' [Commemorative Chapels in Gareja: The Church of the Annunciation at Uدابno and its Wall Paintings], in Z. Skhirtladze, ed., *Desert Monasticism: Gareja and the Christian East* (Tbilisi, 2001), 240–53. This image is probably posthumous, and designed to promote the cult of the king after his execution by the Ilkhanid Arghun Khan.
21. On this image: H.C. Evans, 'Imperial aspirations: Armenian Cilicia and Byzantium in the thirteenth century' in A. Eastmond, ed., *Eastern Approaches to Byzantium*, SPBS: 9 (Aldershot, 2001), 243–56; also H.C. Evans, 'Kings and Power Bases. Sources for Royal Portraits in Armenian Cilicia', in R.W. Thomson, J.-P. Mahé, eds., *From Byzantium to Iran. Armenian Studies in Honor of Nina G. Garsoïan* (Atlanta GA, 1997), 485–507, esp. 492–4.
22. These are discussed by Evans, 'Imperial aspirations', 246–7; also Evans, 'Kings and Power Bases', 490–2.
23. See, for example, the comparable robes worn by Georgian and Armenian princes at Jvari and Mren at the turn of the sixth century: W. Djobadze, 'The Sculptures on the Eastern Façade of the Holy Cross of Mtzhketa' *OrChr* 44 (1960), 112–35 and 45 (1961), 70–77; J.-M. Thierry, N. Thierry, 'La cathédrale de Mren et sa décoration' *CahArch* 21 (1971), 43–77.
24. For images of the heirs to the Georgian throne in local dress, accompanied either by a ruler in Byzantine dress or court nobles in identical local dress see: A. Eastmond, *Royal Imagery in Medieval Georgia* (University Park, PA, 1998), Figs 28–30 (Ateni, c. 1090), pis. XI (Matskhvarishi, 1140) and XI (Qintsvisi, c. 1207). This final example demonstrates the equivalence of Byzantine dress, since the same heir, Giorgi VI is shown in Byzantine *loros* at Natlismtsemeli (Figs 62–3).
25. P. Donabédian, J.-M. Thierry, *Les Arts Arméniens* (Paris, 1987), 511–12, Fig. 125. M. Hasrat'yan, J.-M. Thierry, 'Dadivank' en Arc'ax', *REArm* 16 (1982), 259–87;

- For historical background: R.H. Hewsen, 'The Kingdom of Arc'ax', in T.J. Samuelian, M.E. Stone, eds., *Medieval Armenian Culture*, University of Pennsylvania Armenian Texts and Studies: 6 (Chico CA, 1984), 42–68.
26. B. Brentjes, S. Mnazakanjan, N. Stepanjan, *Kunst des Mittelalters in Armenien* (Vienna, Munich, 1982), Fig. 152; Donabédian, Thierry, *Les Arts Arméniens*, 536.
 27. B. Ulubabian, M. Hasratian, *Gandzasar*, DDAA: 17 (Milan, 1987), Fig. 26; M. Hasratian, J.-M. Thierry, 'Le couvent de Ganjasar', *REArm* 15 (1981), 289–316, Fig. 28. On Hasan Jalal al-Dawla see I.A. Orbeli, 'Hasan Djalal kniaz' xachenskii', *HAN* 3 (1909), 146–74 (reprinted in I.A. Orbeli, *Izbrannye Trudy* (Erevan, 1963), 146–74). This royal iconography also looks back to earlier Armenian ruler imagery, including the image of king Gagik of Vaspurakan at Aghtamar: L. Jones, 'The Church of the Holy Cross and the Iconography of Kingship', *Gesta* 33/2 (1994), 104–17; and the manuscript image of princess Maren of Kars: T.F. Mathews, A.-C. Daskalakis, 'The portrait of Princess Maren of Kars, Jerusalem 2556, fol. 1356', in Thomson, Mahé, eds., *From Byzantium to Iran*, 475–84.
 28. C. Cahen, *Pre-Ottoman Turkey* (London, 1968), Fig. 62; or the image of the judge of the city of Merv from Paris, BN, MS arabe 6094, fol. 13v in H.C. Evans, W.D. Wixom, eds., *The Glory of Byzantium. Art and Culture of the Middle Byzantine Era, A.D. 843–1261* (New York, 1997), No. 287; the reliefs from Konya: T. Talbot Rice, *The Seljuqs in Asia Minor* (London, 1961), Figs 58 and 60; or the enamel bowl centred on the Ascension of Alexander, which has court scenes around the edge: Evans, Wixom, *Glory of Byzantium*, No. 281. For a discussion of the origins of the bowl, which are occasionally linked with Georgia, see T. Steppan, *Die Artuqidenschale im Tiroler Landesmuseum Ferdinandeum Innsbruck. Mittelalterliche Emailkunst zwischen Orient und Occident* (Munich, 1995). Evans, Wixom, *Glory of Byzantium*, No. 282.
 29. V. Langlois, *Numismatique de l'Arménie au Moyen Age* (Paris, 1855; reprint 1978), pl. 2 nos. 2 and 3.
 30. V.J. Djurić, 'Tri događaja u srpskoj državi XIV veka i njihov odjek u slikarstvu', *Zbornik za likovne umetnosti* 4 (1968), 97 and supported by C. Walter, 'The Significance of Unction in Byzantine Iconography', *BMGS* 2 (1976), 70–71. I am grateful to Zaga Gavrilovic for bringing the Serbian material to my attention.
 31. K. Wessel in *RBK* III, 398–403.
 32. *Pseudo-Kodinos: Traité des Offices*, ed. J. Verpeaux (Paris, 1966), IV, 200, 17.
 33. The interpretation of the horn held by Marko at Markov Manastir has been expanded and refined by Z. Gavrilovic, 'The Portrait of King Marko at Markov Manastir (1376–81)', *ByzF* 16 (1990), 415–28.
 34. Walter, 'The Significance of Unction in Byzantine Iconography', 61–66 provides a partial list of examples.
 35. David appears alone twice in the surviving decoration of the naos: once on the arch in front of the main apse, and once on the east, most prominent, face of the drum of the dome. He also appears in the images of the *Anastasis*.
 36. P. Magdalino, 'Observations on the Nea Ekklesia of Basil I', *JÖB* 37 (1987), 58.
 37. P. Magdalino, *The Empire of Manuel I Komnenos* (Cambridge, 1993), 436 (quoting the coronation oration of Michael Italikos), and 447 (quoting a poem of Manganeios Pródromos, although this states that Manuel was 'not anointed by Samuel and the horn, but ordained by God from birth').
 38. A.A.M. Bryer, 'David Komnenos and Saint Eleutherios', *AP* 42 (1988–89), 166.

39. The claim is promoted in Georgian royal literature: *KTs* 1, 323; trans. Thomson, *Rewriting Caucasian history*, 315; see C. Toumanoff, 'Iberia on the Eve of Bagratid Rule. An Enquiry into the Political History of Eastern Georgia between the VIth and the IXth Century', *Le Muséon* 65 (1952), 224–30. The claim to Davidic descent had been recognised in Byzantium since the tenth century: Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos, *De Administrando Imperio*, eds. G. Moravcsik & R.J.H. Jenkins, *Dumbarton Oaks Texts*: 1 (Washington DC, 1967), chap. 45_{1–8}.
40. Manuel's marriage is recorded only by Panaretos, 63_{1–3}, who gives no indication of Rusudan's lineage. However, it is inconceivable that Manuel would marry outside royal circles, and one of his daughters would later marry Davit VI Narin. M. Kursanskis, 'Relations matrimoniales entre Grands Comnènes de Trébizonde et princes géorgiens', *BK* 34 (1976), 112–27, esp. 112–13.
41. Walter, 'The Significance of Unction in Byzantine Iconography', 70, identifies the saint as St George, but gives no reasons for this identification.
42. B. Martin-Hisard, 'Trébizonde et le culte de saint Eugène (6e-11e s)' *REArm* 14 (1980), 307–43.
43. Lazaropoulos, *Synopsis*, 308–34 (miracle 23).
44. Wroth, *Catalogue of the Coins*, 236, pl. XXXII.6–10, notes that the one exception is Manuel's *nomismata*, which have a seated Virgin on the reverse, which he tentatively identifies as the Panagia Chrysokephalos.
45. Boniface of Montferrat, the first Latin ruler of Thessaloniki, and Theodore both named their sons Demetrios, clearly in homage to the city and its patron. On the importance of naming heirs see Choniates, *Historia*, 169; A.A.M. Bryer, 'Family Planning in Trebizond: The AIMA of the Grand Komnenoi', in J.S. Langdon, ed., *To Hellênikon. Studies in Honor of Speros Vryonis Jr vol 1: Hellenic Antiquity and Byzantium* (New York, 1983), 85–90. Theodore had himself depicted on coins being presented with the city of Thessaloniki by the saint, which explicitly worked to link his authority to the city through the cult [Hendy, *Coinage*, 268 (coin 37.3)]. The seals of Theodore's successor, John Doukas, also gave prominence to the walls of the city: G. Zacos, A. Vegler, *Byzantine Lead Seals* vol 1, part 1 (Basel, 1972), 105 (No. 115). The inscription on the seal retains the traditional universal title of the emperor. See also T. Bertelè, 'Monete di Giovanni Comneno Duca, Imperatore di Salónica (1237–44)', *Numismática (Rivista bimestrale di numismática)* 16 (1950), 61–79.
46. The text is given in C. Foss, *Nicaea: A Byzantine Capital and Its Praises* (Brookline, MA, 1996), 104–7.
47. On the church of St Tryphon see H.W. Buchwald, 'Lascarid Architecture', *JOB* 28 (1979), 263 for references; on coins see M.F. Hendy, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection* 4, part 2, *The Emperors of Nicaea and their Contemporaries (1204–1261)* (Washington DC, 1999), pl. 35 (6.1). Theodore II's predecessors had aligned themselves with Sts Theodore and Constantine – which looked to a broader field.
48. On eagles see *ODB* 1, 669.
49. For example the silk of c.1000 at Auxerre: J. Durand, ed., *Byzance, L'art byzantin dans les collections publiques françaises* (Paris, 1992), 377 (no. 285).
50. R.L. Wolff, 'The Latin Empire of Constantinople, 1204–1261', in K. Setton, ed., *A History of the Crusades 2: The Later Crusades: 1189–1311*, ed. R.L. Wolff, H.W. Hazard (Madison, Milwaukee, London, 1969), 189.

51. The third sculpted image of an eagle, on the south porch, which is accompanied by the inscription δ ἀ[γίος] Μαρκος was discussed in chapter four.
52. This eagle has one further detail which cannot now be made out. An element can be seen over its left wing: is this the top of a sword (held by the crossed-over belt) or the head of the dragon that is being crushed?
53. T. Talbot Rice, *The Seljuqs in Asia Minor* (London, 1961), Fig. 54.
54. C. Cahen, *Pre-Ottoman Turkey* (London, 1968), Fig. 61. See also references in *ELZ*, 5:285–6.
55. G. Hennequin, *Catalogue des monnaies musulmanes de la bibliothèque nationale. Asie Pré-Mongole: Les Saljuqs et leurs successeurs* (Paris, 1985), No. 677 (Zangi II of Sinjār). But also see H.M. Brown, 'Some reflections on the Figured Coinage of the Artuqids and Zengids', in D. Kouymjian, ed., *Near Eastern Numismatics, Iconography, Epigraphy and History. Studies in Honor of George C. Miles* (Beirut, 1974), 353–8.
56. Image in C. Hillenbrand, *The Crusades. Islamic Perspectives* (Edinburgh, 1999), 38.
57. See, for example, R. Wittkower, 'Eagle and Serpent. A Study in the Migration of Symbols', *JWCI* 2 (1938–39), 293–325.
58. K. Otto-Dorn, 'Figurai Stone Reliefs on Seljuq Sacred Architecture in Anatolia', *Kunst des Orients* 12 (1/2) (1978–79), 103–49, esp. 114–25.
59. The relief panel showing an eagle attacking a hare in the opus sectile floor of the nave was removed in 1923. It is now in The Museum of Byzantine Culture, Thessaloniki, no. AI-775. A similar explanation best suits the comparable tenth-century images of eagles attacking animals on two tenth-century Georgian churches built to the south-east of Trebizond in the Çoruh valley: W. Djobadze, *Early Medieval Monasteries in Tao, Klarjeti and Savseti* (Stuttgart, 1992), 121 and Figs 160 (Oshki), 201 (Khakhuli); as well as that in the funerary chapel of the Proseans at Surb Geghard of 1283 (which Donabédian, Thierry, *Les Arts Arméniens*, Fig. 351, describe as 'heraldic?').
60. An eagle can also be seen on the robes of Prince Yaroslav Vsevolodovich at Nereditsa (1246): Lazarev, *Old Russian Murals and Mosaics*, Fig. 52.
61. The idea has been proposed by: G. Millet, 'Les monastères et les églises de Trébizonde', *BCH* 19 (1895), 428; *Haghia Sophia*, 2, 154; Finlay, *Journals*, 300, calls it the 'singleheaded eagle of Trebizond', although elsewhere he notes the commonness of eagles in the Byzantine world.
62. Eagles (both single- and double-headed) appear on the *suppedia* of the first Palaiologan emperors in an early-fourteenth century copy of Pachymeres's *History* (Munich Cod. Monacensis gr. 442), Theodore II is depicted on fol. 7v with double-headed eagles, whereas Michael VIII is depicted on 174r with single-headed eagles. For images see Spatharakis, *The Portrait*, Figs 108 and 109. Theodore I Laskaris is described as 'eagle-swift' and 'high-flying eagle' in his encomium of Nicaea: Foss, *Nicaea*, 148, 152. A distinction between the Trapezuntine single-headed eagle and the Palaiologan double-headed eagle was first proposed by G. Finlay, *A History of Greece* 4, ed H.W. Tozer, *Medieval Greece and the Empire of Trebizond AD 1204–1461* (Oxford, 1877), 347–8, in connection with the image of John II Grand Komnenos and Eudokia at the church of St Gregory of Nyssa in Trebizond 'to mark her rank as an imperial princess of the East and the West'. For further discussion see Bryer, Winfield, *Pontos*, 226–7.
63. On the problem of the existence of 'heraldic' symbols in Byzantium see A.V.

Solovjev, 'Les embèmes héraldiques de Byzance et les slaves', *Seminarium Kondakovianum* 7 (1935), 119–64; A. Furlas, 'Adler und Doppeladler: kunstgeschichtliche Zeugnisse zum palaiologischen Doppeladler', in D. Ahrens, ed., *Thiasos ton Mousôn. Studien zu Antike und Christentum. Festschrift für Josef Fink zum 70. Geburtstag* (Vienna, 1984), 179–90.

64. It is tempting to propose that eagles as heraldic animals were introduced to Trebizond from the west through the Italian trading communities in the city, although eagles were only just beginning to be adopted as a symbol by Frederick II in the thirteenth century. An imperial sarcophagus found in the nineteenth century at Nymphaion, which presumably therefore dates to the period of the empire of Nicaea, includes *fleurs de lys*, again suggesting a western emblematic influence: C. Texier, 'Tombeaux du Moyen Age à Kutayah et à Nymphi (Asie Mineure)', *Revue Archéologique* 1 (1844), 323–5, pl. 7. *Fleurs-de-lys* were also placed on the coins of Theodore II Laskaris: M.F. Hendy, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection* 4, part 2: *The Emperors of Nicaea and their Contemporaries (1204–1261)*, Dumbarton Oaks Catalogues (Washington DC, 1999), 526, pl. 36, no.13b.

Note to Conclusion

1. A.A.M. Bryer, 'The Church of Haghia Sophia in Trebizond', *Apollo* 89 (1969), 270.

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